

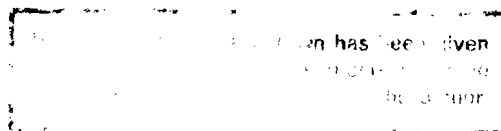
MIGRANT LABOUR REMITTANCES,  
THE DEVELOPMENTAL CYCLE AND RURAL DIFFERENTIATION  
IN A LESOTHO COMMUNITY

by

Andrew David Spiegel

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Receiving remitted earnings - a woman signs  
for a registered letter at the local postal  
agency counter.

## A B S T R A C T

This dissertation addresses the problem of the impact of a migratory wage-labour system on relations of production and of distribution in rural Lesotho. Some 200 000 of that country's 1,25 million people are oscillating labour migrants to South Africa, most of them men. Their earnings, remitted to their rural home communities, provide the primary means of subsistence for their families and others left behind.

The study focusses on the diffusion of remittances and the rural differentiation to which this is related. It is argued that such differentiation is closely associated with the cyclical process of domestic development in rural Lesotho. Data is presented to demonstrate how differentials in wealth correspond, to a large extent, with phases in the domestic developmental cycle. The strategies of homestead building, a clear indicator of domestic development, are described in order to point to the correspondence between differentiation and the developmental cycle.

The more general process of regional class formation is also recognized. The interconnectedness of the local elite and the national bureaucracy, which together form an incipient petty bourgeoisie, demonstrates the effect of class formation at the local level.

Remittances are seen to form the basis for economic activity which occurs in rural Lesotho communities. Agriculture, for example, is found to have as much a distributive function as a productive one insofar as co-operation provides an avenue for the diffusion of wage-earnings derived from outside productive activity.



The material means of reproduction thus come primarily from involvement in the southern African industrial economy. It is concluded, therefore, that the process of incorporation has reached a point at which the people of Lesotho form a stratum of the regional working class, and it is suggested that this may also be the case for the residents of other peripheral labour exporting areas in southern Africa.

University of Cape Town

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## P R E F A C E

The field research for this study was conducted between September 1976 and April 1977 while I was employed by Rhodes University on a larger project examining the migrant labour system and its effects from a social anthropological perspective. I am grateful to that University, and to its Institute of Social and Economic Research in which the Migrant Labour Project was first based, for the opportunity afforded me to do this research and for the help and advice I received both in the field and while I was writing up my subsequent report. The project was funded by the Chamber of Mines of South Africa through the Human Resources Laboratory of their Research Organisation.

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A grant from the Harry Oppenheimer Institute for African Studies, University of Cape Town, made possible a short return visit to the field during December/January 1978/9.

The writing of this dissertation has been supervised by Professor Martin West whose patient help and encouragement have been responsible for my having completed it. I have also received encouragement and advice from others in the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Cape Town, including visiting professors and members of the departmental post-graduate seminar between July 1978 and October 1979. To all of these people I offer a big thank you.

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My wife, Diana, deserves special mention. She accompanied me in the field and provided moral support through the years-long process of writing reports and finally this dissertation which she has typed so excellently. My thanks go also to Emile Boonzaier who has helped with the proof-reading.

In Lesotho I received assistance of various kinds from a number of people. I am grateful to the District Administrator and his staff in Qacha's Nek and to the District Chief. Dr. Roel Melchers was especially kind and helpful during the time he was working at the Qacha's Nek hospital. Arie van der Wiel and Dr. John and Judy Gay all provided me with accommodation and gave me valuable advice and assistance on my occasional visits to Maseru. Without the conscientious help of my assistants in the village I could not have obtained anywhere near as much data as I did. My thanks goes to them too, although they remain anonymous (see note 1).



My greatest debt lies, however, with the chieftainess and people of the two villages which I call Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng. Without their courtesy and help I could never have begun to record the material which I present here. My deepest gratitude goes to these people who so good-naturedly allowed my intrusion into their lives, and with unfailing hospitality and friendship let me pry into affairs which sometimes were, in one old man's words, "... not about the law. You are now asking about some of the bad things of the Basotho."

### Notes

1. Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng are pseudonyms for the two adjacent villages where I did my fieldwork. All personal names used in the text are also pseudonyms. They are not necessarily names I have come across during my research in Lesotho and should thus not be taken to represent a set of presently utilized personal names.

Makhaola was the chief originally placed by the paramount to administer the two wards comprising the Qacha's Nek district (Sheddiack: 1954: 146), and I have used that name - quite a common one in the district - to identify the one village in which I worked. The adjacent village I have called Lithabeng, which means 'in or on the mountain', and is a fairly common place name throughout Lesotho.

My use of pseudonyms is in deference to the wishes of many of my informants that they remain anonymous and because it is the first obligation of the anthropologist to protect the people among whom he works. If any of them should read this dissertation they will doubtless, however, be able to identify themselves and one another. Hopefully I have not treated them unkindly.

2. Southern Sotho (Sesotho) has been recorded in two orthographies. I use the orthography presently in use in Lesotho. My work is about people in that country and many object to the 'new' orthography, in use in South Africa, on the grounds that it is a symbol of the apartheid system which is so abhorrent to most Basotho.

The 'old' orthography includes a number of peculiarities (cf. Murray: 1976a: viii). Probably the most important to note before reading the text which follows is that an l before an i or a u should be read as a d, and a th is an aspirated t and not a th as in English: e.g. Lithabeng is pronounced 'Dit'abeng'.

3. Lesotho is in the process of metricating units of measure. I have used both metric and imperial units because my sources - both written and oral - vary in the measures used.

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

### I RURAL DIFFERENTIATION AND THE DEVELOPMENTAL CYCLE

The remittances of Basotho who are migratory wage-labourers in South Africa provide the means of reproduction of the rural communities from which they come. They are also the primary source of subsistence for the members of those communities. Yet not all people have direct access to remittances and not all households include a remitting wage-earning member, although all depend ultimately on these remittances. Moreover, some households hold land and stock while others have neither these local assets nor direct access to remittances. Clearly, then, there is a certain degree of differentiation in such communities. I begin this dissertation by discussing this phenomenon.

Differentials in wealth have always existed in Lesotho, as in other areas in southern Africa. These were most commonly apparent in the sizes of herds and flocks held, although the institution of putting out stock (ho fisa; Nguni = ukusisa) may have hidden some of the extremes. Since at least the time of World War II, however, there has been an ever increasing degree of rural differentiation, including differential access to arable land. Most field research and rural surveys conducted in the sub-continent since that time have established this.<sup>1</sup> But none of the earlier sources attempts to attribute such differentiation to any particular set of factors. They merely describe it.

More recently various authors have attempted to account for these differences. Thus Farsons (1977) considers the putting out system in early Botswana as the basis of an authority structure through a system of clientage. Another example is the attempt by

Innes and O'Meara (1976) to re-analyze contemporary rural Transkeian data in terms of the formation of classes in the rural areas. A recent study of rural Mozambique (The Mozambican Miner: 1977: 166-110) does much the same.

The fieldwork data which form the basis of this study, bear out the fact that, in rural Lesotho, there are significant differentials between households in land- and stockholding, in direct access to migratory wage-earnings and in material wealth in general. Some households are in direct receipt of wage-labour remittances from one or more absent wage-earners, while others have no direct source of wage income. A few households have usufruct over the three arable fields which are their expected right (Sheddick: 1954: 77) and some also hold relatively large numbers of livestock. But most hold lesser amounts of land and few livestock. There are also households which have neither land nor livestock (see Chapter III below). There is, however, no necessary correspondence between land- and stockholding.

Murray (1978) has shown quite clearly the fallacy in Lesotho of the often cited idea that households without rural resources, the 'poorer' households, have a higher incidence of migrancy than do those which are relatively 'richer' in agricultural terms. If anything, the converse correspondence occurs, for much of a household's rural wealth derives from its continued access to wage-labour income. Murray (1976a: 115-120) has demonstrated a significant positive correlation between crop yields and cash inputs into agricultural production.

A household's wealth must be measured in terms of more than just its agricultural resources and output. Its ability to provide its own sustenance regularly (whether from domestic crops or through the purchase of foodstuffs), the size and style of the houses comprising the homestead, the clothing its members wear

and the household furniture and equipment it owns - these are an index not of the household's agricultural output but of its access to wage-earned income, for that is the primary resource in these communities. This is not to say that all households are in direct and regular receipt of remittances from wage-labourers. There are many households which must gain access to these monies through indirect routes. Agricultural activity is often the channel through which remittances are diffused, but there are others such as bridewealth transfers (cf. Murray: 1976a: 215-47), petty trading and prostitution, and a certain amount of reciprocal and unidirectional gift exchange, some of which has further transactional significance. The point is, however, that the primary resource and source of subsistence for the whole rural community is wage-earning. Wages are then diffused through the community to the various households in it, although by no means equally.

Differentiation in these rural communities can thus be categorized on the basis of households' direct receipt of wage-earnings as well as on their access to arable land and the size of their herds. In Part B of this dissertation I distinguish both between households with and those without direct access to wage-earnings and between households holding arable land and those without.

Both of these distinctions are related, however, to the phase which the respective households have reached in their domestic development. As households mature developmentally they gain usufruct over arable fields which they previously have not had, and they invest their wage-earnings in rural resources. This suggests clearly the need to invoke the concept of the developmental cycle of the domestic group in any analysis of rural differentiation in the southern African periphery, although care must be taken not to use it in such a way as to exclude other tools of analysis such

as those which understand rural differentiation as an indicator of the process of class formation (cf. Raikes: 1978).

The concept of the developmental cycle of domestic groups gained prominence in social anthropology with the work particularly of Meyer Fortes and Jack Goody (see Goody: 1958). The latter has continued to use it quite extensively in his more recent works (Goody: 1976; 1977). Domestic developmental cycle analyses were important in overcoming the wholly static analyses of the earlier structure functionalists, but the dynamic they introduced was purely cyclical. They were thus unable to account for change over linear time.

One of the main foci of Fortes' (1958) contribution to the volume entitled The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups (Goody: 1958) was the variation in the size and membership of domestic units in any one society. He argued that differing patterns of domestic group membership and residence, in any one society, are accountable in terms of the developmental phase reached by the different domestic units being considered. And he set up a paradigm of the developmental cycle across societal boundaries. In it he identified three main phases: Firstly a phase of expansion of the domestic group; secondly a phase of dispersion or fission; and thirdly a final phase of replacement (ibid: 4-5). This, however, is not the most useful aspect of the concept for my present purposes. I am concerned, in this dissertation, with the relationship between the material conditions of a household and the developmental phase which it has reached.

An earlier analyst who addressed precisely this problem was A.V. Chayanov (1966). In his studies of the Russian peasantry during the first 30 years of the twentieth century Chayanov emphasized the relationship between the material wealth of a

household and the extent of its demographic development, i.e. the phase it had reached in the domestic developmental cycle; and he treated rural differentiation "in terms of demographic cycles rather than class antagonisms" (Thorner: 1966: xxi). Chayanov (1966) regarded the material conditions of the peasant family farm as a function of its domestic development, recorded in demographic terms, and he argued that the output per worker was directly related to the ratio of consumers to workers in the family - the c/w ratio (ibid: 77ff.). This, in turn, he saw as a function of the point the family had reached in its domestic development, which was cyclical (ibid: 53ff.).

Stenning (1958), one of the participants in the developmental cycle symposium (Goody: 1958), also concerned himself with the relationship between material conditions and the developmental cycle. Focussing on the Pastoral Fulani - and limiting his analysis to pastoralists only - Stenning examined the relationship between herd size and size of domestic unit, arguing that these are interdependent variables. Unlike Chayanov, Stenning did not see demography as determinant but argued rather that a balance between herd size and family size could be attained by altering either variable. He did not explicitly refer to a constant ratio of herd size to worker size having to be maintained for household viability, but this is implicit in his discussion.

In the analysis which follows I also consider the relationship between material conditions and the developmental cycle. I do not mean to suggest, however, that the domestic developmental cycle, and the demographic variables associated with it, necessarily determine differentials in the wealth of households in rural Lesotho. The manner in which the population of Lesotho has



been incorporated into the wider southern African political economy has resulted in that population's dependence on wage-labour earnings for its own reproduction. Rural differentiation is thus related to the wage-earning capacity of the respective households and this is related to, but not determined by, the domestic development of the household. Furthermore, there are certain households which stand out from the rest in terms of their material wealth, and this difference is attributable, in part, to a more general process of regional class formation (see Chapter IX).

From the data with which he was working Chayanov (1966: 56) evolved the cyclical idea of "theoretically normal family development". This may be compared with Fortes' (1958) paradigm referred to above. We may also attempt to construct a similar 'normal', 'paradigmatic' or 'modal' cycle of household development for rural Lesotho. This would show that landlessness coupled with wage-earning is associated with the earlier developmental phases of the domestic unit, while landholding increases over time. Wage-earning is characteristic of all phases until what might be termed a zenith is reached. Thereafter other sources of cash income must be found.

Households comprising young newly married couples are unlikely to hold arable land but they almost invariably receive a wage income earned by the absent household head. In time, and through the exchange of remittances for local favours, these households can expect to be allocated fields. But they continue to depend directly on wages while channelling some of their remittances into hiring labour to work those fields. At a later phase we find households which have reached a developmental zenith. They can depend on wage income from adult sons while working their fields for themselves through the labour of the 'retired' household head

himself. The next phase sees the decline from this peak as the wage-earning sons establish homesteads of their own and the natal household loses their direct support. By this phase agriculture has taken on added importance. The household's own fields may provide a significant contribution to sustenance needs. And, more important, the household's labour, draught team and implements may open an avenue through which to tap others' remittances. The phase which follows is still less secure for it is during that time that the household's ability to draw off others' earnings may be limited by lack of labour, draught power, or implements - all of which have become depleted. It is then that income through irregular petty trading, especially in the sale of home-brewed beer, may provide a significant part of the household's income. By this phase the household's fields will have to be worked by an outside contractor and this will reduce the yield reaching the homestead itself.

The above represents the 'modal' cycle of household development. But there are many households which fall by the wayside or jump phases. An example is the type of household headed by a young widow or deserted wife. Such a household is unlikely ever to reach the zenith. It may however have been allocated fields and thus have the material characteristics of the next phase. Another example is the type of household comprising a man and his family, all of whom have spent many years away from the village, and which has never been allocated fields. In spite of such a household's 'advanced' phase of demographic development it still has the material characteristics of an early phase household.

There is indeed a correspondence between landholding and phase reached in domestic development. But allocations of land

depend also on the investment of wage-earnings in the local community. Before a family is eligible for a field it must first be granted a homestead site and build a house. And thereafter it will still have to transfer gifts and bribes and plan strategically to be granted a field. Those households which are able to muster the most influential local support for their claims to arable land are the households most likely to be allocated fields at a relatively early stage. Frequently a young household head's relative success in wage-earning, combined with regular returns home, may improve his household's chances of gaining access to arable land quite early on.

Other households which are quite readily able to gain access to rural resources, including arable land, are those with kin links with the more influential families in the community - the kin of the chief and the principal advisers. With the households of teachers and clerks, these households form a potentially distinct category set apart from the rest. Like most households their primary source of income comes from wage-earnings, but in 'non-productive' labour. In this regard they differ from the majority. Their relationship to capital is thus different from that of the other households and they are characterized at this level by features of what Poulantzas (1973) calls the 'new' petty bourgeoisie, although I prefer the term 'salaried' petty bourgeoisie.<sup>2</sup>

There is one other category of households which to a degree stands apart from the general pattern. This includes 'successful' petty traders (like cafe-owners) whose primary resource is not wage-earning. Following Poulantzas (ibid), Innes and O'Meara (1976) have referred to such households as of the 'traditional' petty bourgeoisie. In this case I prefer the term 'entrepreneurial' petty bourgeoisie.<sup>2</sup>

Just as agricultural resources promise security for households dependent on wage-earnings, so do these petty bourgeois households look to the fields and livestock as a safeguard against material misfortune. Many of these households also include wage-labouring members whose remittances provide a subsidy for continued trading. Their trading activities thus depend doubly on wage-earnings: They are subsidized by wage-earned inputs and they rely for trade on remittances reaching home.

The categorization which I use to order my data is based initially on relations to the two means of production: capital on the one hand and local land for agriculture on the other. I do not, however, see these categories necessarily as incipient classes or class fractions. Rather, they are cyclical categories through which most households pass as they proceed through their domestic development.

The only exceptions are the salaried and entrepreneurial petty bourgeoisie. Their relationship with capital is different from that of the other (cyclical) categories though they do share a common interest in agriculture. It seems, moreover, that the differences between petty bourgeois households on the one hand, and those of the other (cyclical) categories on the other, are beginning to persist from one generation to the next. The children of cafe-owners, teachers and clerks are more likely to enter those kinds of occupations than are the children of wage-labourers. Moreover there are local advantages to be gained by persons in petty bourgeois households, especially with regard to the allocation of fields. They are thus set apart from members of the other households. But as long as the present system of land tenure persists and as long as the popular interest in agriculture remains common to all households we cannot regard these

representatives of the petty bourgeoisie as being any more distinctive than a nascent class fraction.

This is all the more evident since there are recent signs of an increase in popularity of cafe trading as a means of livelihood after retirement from wage-labour, and as a supplement or even a substitute to agriculture. Regular petty trading is thus being drawn into the sphere of cyclical differentiation. It remains to be seen, however, whether this will result in a decreasing willingness to participate in wage-labour<sup>3</sup> as the Basotho possibly become a 'nation of shopkeepers'<sup>4</sup> with a concomitant ossification of differentiation.

I have divided the body of the dissertation into two parts. Part A sets the scene of the study. It begins with a chapter in which I discuss Lesotho and its contemporary dependence on the export of migratory wage-labour. The discussion begins with a brief resume of the history of labour migration and under-development in Lesotho. It focusses also on the legal and policy restrictions governing foreign African labour migrants in South Africa as well as on the system of land tenure in Lesotho and the uncertainty surrounding inheritance of arable land. This is followed by a chapter introducing the people of the community in which I conducted fieldwork and the area in which they live. Some demographic data including rates of absenteeism, levels of education, household composition and so forth are included here. In Chapter IV I present some aggregate figures of land and livestock distribution and I discuss briefly the agricultural techniques used by members of the community. The same chapter includes a discussion of the various forms of wage-labour in which both male and female members of the community were employed. It also looks at the wage rates and remittances of a selection of mine labourers.

Part B comprises five chapters in each of which I discuss a different category of household. I begin, in Chapter V, by looking at those households which receive wages fairly regularly but which do not hold any land. For the most part these are households which are still at a relatively early phase in their domestic development and I discuss their strategies to establish their homesteads and to begin in their quest for usufruct over arable land. I discuss also those few landless households which are also directly dependent on wage-earnings but which, in demographic terms, are not in an early phase of domestic development. They include households of returned absconders and households headed by unmarried wage-earning women.

In Chapter VI I turn to those households which both hold arable land and receive wage-earnings. Using developmental criteria I divide these further into three sub-categories (a) the less mature households which are still in the process of establishing their rural bases through gaining access to land; (b) those which have developed a little further and are able now to consolidate their rural resources; and (c) those which have reached a zenith insofar as they are able to utilize their local resources as effectively as they ever will while still depending on remittances from younger generation members.

Having reached their developmental zenith, households then begin to go into decline. In Chapter VII I discuss those households which have usufruct over arable land but no longer regularly receive remittances. These are divided into two sub-categories: (a) Those which are still managing to continue their agricultural efforts despite their lack of remittances. They are households which have been relatively well prepared in the past for this phase; (b) households which have been unable to prepare adequately



for this period of domestic decline. At times they may be unable to work their fields because of a lack of resources. Among these are a few households which have slipped out of the 'modal' developmental phase and whose potential wage-earning member is unable to be employed because of ill-health.

Chapter VIII is concerned with households which have neither land nor a direct source of remittances. They are households which have fallen aside of the 'modal' domestic developmental cycle in earlier years and have become marginal to both the local and the wider sectors of the economy. These are all small woman-headed households of the type which Murray (1978: 137) describes as 'severely disadvantaged'. For many households of this type extra-marital sexual relations provide an important source of income, and I discuss the phenomenon in this chapter.

In Chapter IX our attention turns to petty bourgeois households which are set apart from others in the community. I look at both those households which depend on salaries from clerical and from local administrative positions as well as those which derive a large part of their income from relatively successful small-scale trading. For a variety of reasons these households are able to obtain usufruct over land and access to other local resources rather more easily than most others. They represent a local elite with greater local influence than that held by most people in these rural communities. I discuss their attempts to hold onto their positions of prestige, how they reinforce their status by appeals to both the local and the wider value systems and how they utilize their status to their own and to their immediate descendants' advantage. This then ends the ethnographic body of the dissertation.

In the concluding chapter I address some of the wider issues which have been raised in the course of the preceding chapters. The main issue which I focus on is the problem of locating my analysis in a political-economic analysis of migratory labour in the southern African region. I point out that attempts have been made to analyse rural differentiation in southern African communities as if it represented a point in the process of regional class formation. My argument is that this is not an adequate analysis, primarily because of the cyclical nature of much of this differentiation. I then attempt to demonstrate that the whole rural population must rather be regarded as a part of the regional proletariat while the internal differentiation, for the most part, is seen to be cyclical.

## NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

### Chapter I

1. The classic example is the Keiskammahoeck Rural Survey (see Houghton and Walton: 1952). For Lesotho specifically, see the decennial agricultural surveys especially Morojele (1962), Lesotho (1972) and Sheddick (1954); also see Murray (1976a), Turner (1978). Hamnett (1973) has examined the issue of differential landholding in Lesotho.
2. Poulantzas (1973: 37-9) has distinguished between two fractions of the petty bourgeoisie. These are (i) the traditional petty bourgeoisie which owns its own means of production and operates for itself and by its own labour on those means. This fraction includes small-scale producers (might one include 'peasants'?) and small traders; and (ii) the new petty bourgeoisie which derives a living from wage-labour but in non-productive work. It includes civil servants, clerks and other petty bureaucrats. In the Lesotho context the terms 'new' and 'traditional' are misleading insofar as both forms have been introduced only recently and are thus both new. In anthropological usage, furthermore, 'traditional' has come to refer to forms which might otherwise be described as 'pre-capitalist', i.e. which appear much as they were in the pre-contact period. I have therefore replaced Poulantzas' epithets 'new' and 'traditional' with 'salaried' and 'entrepreneurial' respectively.
3. It may well turn out that the willingness, or not, of Basotho to continue in wage-labour will be overtaken by a reduction in the number of foreign African wage-labourers employed in South Africa, especially by the mines. There are growing fears in Lesotho that large numbers of Basotho will soon become structurally unemployed as the South African economy develops and reduces its dependence on labour from Lesotho, and as the population of Lesotho grows. Murray (forthcoming) refers to a figure of an anticipated 40 000 lost jobs.
4. cf. an earlier reference to the Basotho as "the Jews (sic) of South Africa and (who) have a keen appreciation of anything that is to their advantage in any commercial point of view." (G.M. Theal: Basutoland Records, Vol. 38, 1865-1868: p. 876 - quoted by Parsons and Palmer: 1977: 21).

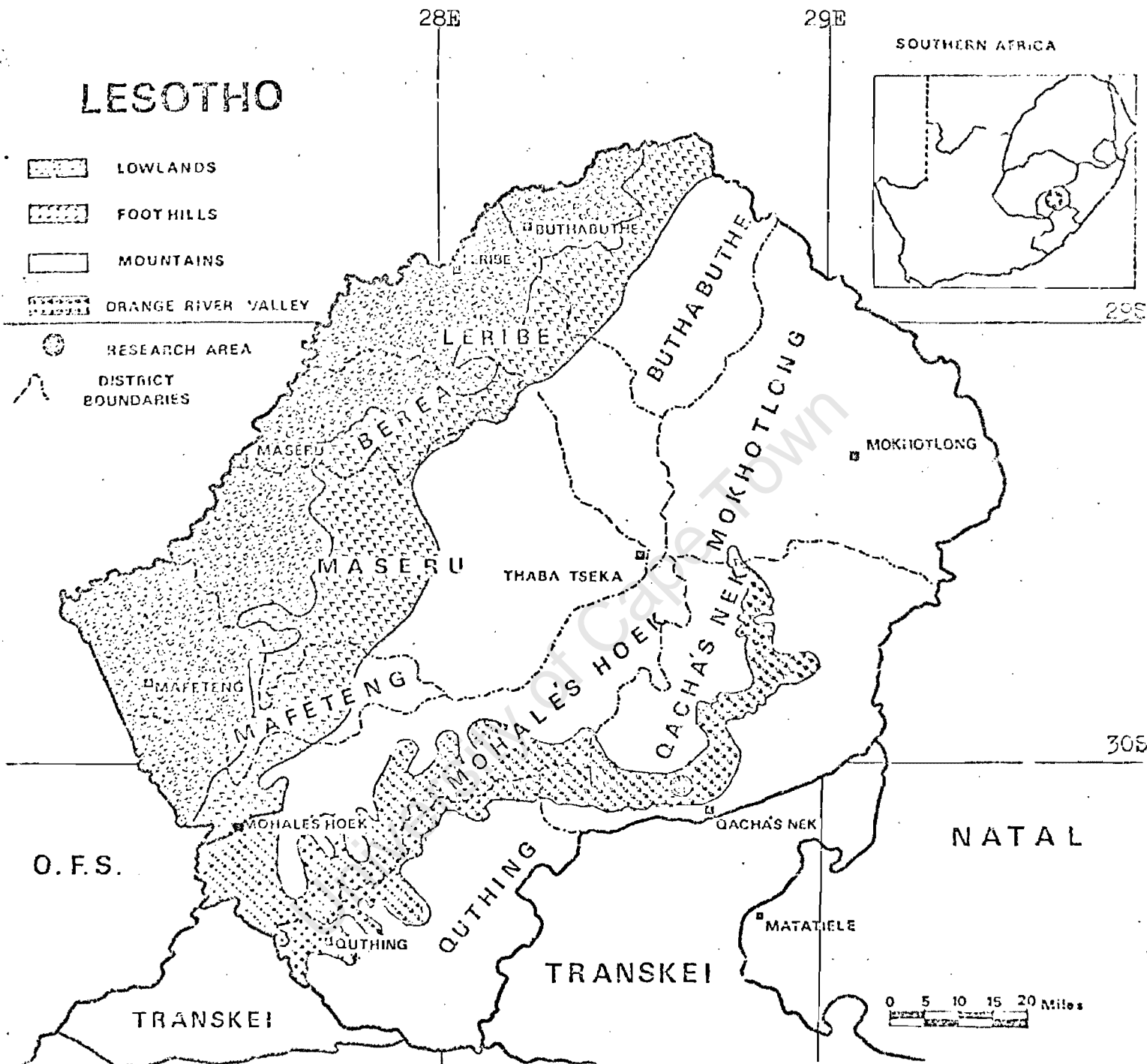
P A R T   A

II   THE LEGAL AND NATIONAL SETTING

Lesotho is a small mountainous country situated on the leeward slopes of the Drakensberg watershed of southern Africa. The country forms an enclave, without access to the sea, within territory internationally recognized as South African (see Map 1 inset)<sup>1</sup>. Preliminary figures from the 1976 census give Lesotho's total de jure<sup>2</sup> population as 1 213 960 persons (Lesotho: 1976c: 2: Table 2), while another source points out that there were 152 188 Lesotho nationals in South Africa at one point in time during 1976 (SAIRR: 1977: 210), a figure amounting to 12,5% of the de jure population. We can thus estimate the de facto population of Lesotho in 1976 at 1 061 772 persons.

Lesotho covers an area of some 30 350 square kilometres, only 12,7% of which is arable - i.e. 3 862 square kilometres (Lesotho: 1973: 36). The country is divided into nine administrative districts, while four ecological zones are commonly distinguished from one another, primarily by their respective altitudes (see Map 1)<sup>3</sup>. These four zones also differ from one another in both area and population densities (see Table inset on Map 1). The present research was conducted in that part of the Qacha's Nek administrative district which lies in the Orange River valley, a zone distinguished by the deep gorge in which it lies, at altitudes below 1 800 metres, on the banks of the Orange River (Senqu). Of the zone's total land area of 2 874 square kilometres only 317 square kilometres (11,0%) is arable while the rest is primarily mountainous pasture land.

Map 1



Zone	Total Land Area		Arable Land Area		De Facto Population 1976		De Facto Population Density	De Facto Population Density on Arable Land
	km <sup>2</sup>	%	km <sup>2</sup>	%	000s	%	persons/km <sup>2</sup>	persons/km <sup>2</sup>
Lowlands	5 200	17,1	1 907	49,4	417,6	39,3	80,31	219
Foothills	4 726	15,6	979	25,3	312,8	29,5	66,18	320
Mountains	17 553	57,8	659	17,1	227,3	21,4	12,91	345
O.R.V.	2 874	9,5	317	8,2	103,9	9,8	31,16	328
Lesotho	30 350	100,0	3 862	100,0	1 061,6	100,0	34,98	275

Source: Lesotho (1973: 90-2: Tables 11.4 and 11.7). O.R.V. = Orange River Valley.

## 1. Food Imports

In spite of the high density of population on arable land, the dearth of local employment opportunities and the extent of labour migration to South African industry, the Lesotho government has perceived the country as a "rural, agricultural nation" (Lesotho: n.d. Vol. I: 71). The country's present need to import large quantities of foodstuffs belies this perception which does nevertheless reflect an earlier period of self sufficiency and a time when the country was a net exporter of grain crops.

Citing missionary correspondence of the time, Murray (1976a: 14-21) has pointed out that the discovery of diamonds in the Kimberley area in 1867 rapidly and irreversibly incorporated the Basotho into a wider economic system both as producers of grain for export and as labour migrants on, and in the vicinity of, the diggings. Like Parsons and Palmer (1977: 24) he has referred to evidence that 100 000 bags of grain were exported from Basutoland<sup>4</sup> in 1873; and he has gone on to show that until the late 1920s the country was consistently a net exporter of maize, the staple foodstuff. Parsons and Palmer say that maize exports reached a peak of 101 000 bags in 1928 (1977: 24). Lesotho's population has since come to rely ever more heavily on wage labour migration to provide the means of subsistence: "The effect of the great depression was effectively to tip the balance between successful farming and large-scale migration away from the former and towards the latter" (Murray: 1976a: 19). This was exacerbated by a most severe drought following an outbreak of blight which destroyed many crops (Murray: 1976a: 19; Parsons and Palmer: 1977: 24).

It is not clear exactly when exports of maize from the country ceased, but current Statistical Bulletins do not record any



such exports. This suggests that if, indeed, any maize is exported it is in quite insignificant quantities that are wholly overshadowed by the amounts of maize imported. Already by 1946-50 the country was importing 25 000 bags a year and exporting only 18 000 (Parsons and Palmer: 1977: 24). Recent figures of maize imports reflect the trend, which Murray has demonstrated, of extensive dependence on importation of even this staple foodstuff. Breakdowns of the cash values of imports by commodity in recent years further demonstrate this trend. Thus in each of the years 1973-5 over 30% of the annual import bill went on consumable items while around 20% was spent on foodstuffs alone (see Appendix A Table A.1). Table 2.1 provides further evidence of Lesotho's contemporary dependence on imported maize, including that donated to the country, when this is compared with the annual maize production estimated by the Bureau of Statistics.

Table 2.1 Imports (including donations) and production of maize and maize (corn) products 1973-5  
(units: 90 kg bags)

Year	Total imports (incl. donations)	(Donations)	Production estimates	Totals
1973	487 202	(72 855)	967 478	1 454 680
1974	432 155	(133 356)	1 361 600	1 793 755
1975	733 682	(75 534)	781 022	1 514 704

Sources: Lesotho (1974: 39: Table 48; 1975: 33: Table 16 and p. 34: Table 18; 1976b: 12: Table 11; 1976c: 8: Table 6).

It is likely that the above table under-represents the level of imports of maize products. A recent contention (cited by Africa: 1976) suggests that import statistics based on customs declarations

are 54% to 66% higher than those derived from the sub-accountancy figures on which the above figures are based. If this is true then Lesotho's dependence on imported maize products is substantially greater than represented here. It is also important to note that the production figures are only estimates derived from sample census material which the Bureau of Statistics acknowledges to be somewhat unreliable (Lesotho: 1972: 9)<sup>5</sup>. Nevertheless, the table gives a fair indication of the extensive dependence of Lesotho on the importation of what is the staple foodstuff for the vast majority of the population. The growth of the country's dependence on imported foodstuffs has been paralleled over the years by her ever increasing reliance on the remitted wages of the ever growing numbers of Basotho employed as migratory wage-labourers in South Africa.

## 2. Labour Migration into South Africa

Murray (1976a: 14-21) has pointed out that it was the discovery of diamonds in the northern Cape in 1867 which incorporated Basotho irreversibly into a wider economy as labour migrants, and the great depression of 1929 which accelerated the reliance placed by Basotho on migratory wage labour. Nevertheless, the phenomenon had been in existence - in different forms - since long before these dates. Kimble (1976: 2-3) has suggested that it was the Lifagane that saw the beginning of labour migration of Basotho into territory occupied by White settlers: "There is strong evidence that one of the Sotho responses (to the dislocation of the Lifagane) was to flee into the Cape Colony for security, and to work there long enough to build up sufficient resources with which to start a new life on their return home." Usually, she has said, this time was spent in the service of a

White farmer, and she has quoted an 1841 report on the conditions of such labour:

The farmers hire them for the year, and give them perhaps a cow, or six sheep or six goats; on top of that they feed them and give them sometimes a present of some old clothing no longer fit for use. When the natives are obedient and stay several years in service, they can earn a small flock, which they take back with them to their country, which will become a source of wealth as it multiplies. (Kimble. 1976: 4)

Older informants of mine reported that this form of wage labour was still in use at a later period, and that difficulties were sometimes encountered by Basotho taking leave of their employers in order to return home after a period of service:

The White man would mark (put aside) sheep for a person. Then, when he saw that they were many, he would allow that person to begin going home, only to waylay him ... Thus sometimes these Maburu (lit. = Boers; sing. = Leburu) would pay a person and allow him to go, only to follow him on his way, to waylay and to kill him, and then to return with the livestock. This was before there were many Englishmen in the area even though it was after Chief Moshoeshoe had given himself over to their government's protection (in 1869).

Women were also reported to have been labour migrants to these areas in these earlier times. Some accompanied their husbands and became domestics in the homes of the farmers by whom their men were employed; others went on their own after having been widowed or divorced. One old informant related how his father's sister, after having been separated from her husband, had left home to work in the Maclear area. He told also of how she had finally made her way home, assisted by a young man with whom she had worked, and of the method she used to avoid losing all her earnings:

My aunt said that she was working in the kitchen of a Leburu who liked her as she flattered him. When she had quite a few animals, she persuaded him to allow her to go home. She then took only some of her sheep with her, leaving others behind as an indication that she intended returning, which she never did. Thus she cleverly deceived him.

Ashton (1952: 162) has suggested that Basotho working in the Cape and Natal during the third quarter of the nineteenth century did so in order to earn money which was used to buy food during famine periods. While this may have been true during times of drought, my oral evidence suggests that migration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was primarily in order to accumulate livestock.<sup>6</sup> It was pointed out by informants that this had been a time when arable land was plentiful and productive and when harvests were sufficient to provide more even than year round subsistence, an argument which has been substantiated by the figures of maize exports cited earlier. Kimble (1976: 9) has pointed to contemporary comment that the purchase of a gun was an important motivation for Basotho migrating to the diamond fields after 1867 (cf. Parsons and Palmer: 1977: 22), and that large numbers of them could be found making their way there on foot. Although I heard no mention made of guns, my own older informants did verify the mode of travel when they related stories they had heard from their own fathers and grandfathers:

When they went to the diamond mines they carried with them lipabi (ground roasted maize) and they travelled on foot ... They returned home many months later with money ... (and) ... they bought things from those who had not gone away. They bought only livestock ... not blankets. People still used goatskins and cow-hides for clothing.

### 3. Labour Migration and South African Law and Policy

The coincidence of the great economic depression of the early 1930s with an exceptionally bad drought in 1932-3, followed by a resurgence in the price of gold, resulted in massive migration from Basutoland into South Africa. This, as Murray (1976a: 19; 27-8) has pointed out, accounts for the almost static de facto population size between the 1936 and 1946 censuses (see

Appendix A Table A.2), with natural increase being matched by emigration (cf. Parsons and Palmer: 1977: 24). The 1936-46 rate of emigration increase was not, however, kept up in the next ten year period. Whereas there had been a 15,3% absentee rate at the 1936 census and a 3,3% increase to an 18,6% absentee rate at the 1946 census, by 1956 the absentee rate had risen by only another 0,9% to 19,5%. This was, nevertheless, an increase in the rate of migration with a higher proportion of the de jure population enumerated as absent in 1956 than had been in 1946 (see Appendix A Table A.3). Ten years later, at the 1966 census, this trend had been markedly reversed, partially as a result of a more stringent set of criteria for definition of an absentee migrant, but primarily as a consequence of the imposition of tighter South African border control in 1963.

This stricter control over entry into South Africa was reflected yet more clearly in the rates of female absenteeism. Between 1956 and 1966 there was a drop, by more than half, in the absolute number of female Basotho migrants, this corresponding to a decrease from 27,1% to 16,8% of the proportion of absentees who were women (see Appendix A Tables A.2 and A.4). More stringent entry requirements followed the introduction and implementation of the (S.A.)<sup>7</sup> Aliens Control Act (No. 30 of 1963) and the (S.A.) Black Laws Amendment Act (No. 76 of 1963) which, inter alia, effectively restricted Basotho who were not legally employed in South Africa to visits of short duration only. These Acts were also effective in preventing women who were not already legally there, from residing or legally finding employment in any of the proscribed areas<sup>8</sup> in South Africa. Although it did not exclude them (or male Basotho) from either agricultural or domestic wage-labour in rural areas outside of the proscribed

areas, this was subjected to restrictions during the following year with the introduction of the (S.A.) Black Labour Act (No. 67 of 1964). In 1966 a further regulation prohibited the employment of foreign Africans in domestic service (Breytenbach: 1972: 42). In spite of these and more recently promulgated regulations, there is still an undetermined number of illegally resident and employed Basotho - both female and male - in South Africa. If they are apprehended and identified as foreign nationals, however, they are liable to deportation and, if they have been employed, their employers are liable to fines.

Section 12 of the (S.A.) Black (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act (No. 25 of 1945, as amended in 1963) proscribes foreign Africans (male and female) from either being employed or entering, being or remaining in any prescribed area in South Africa except with the written permission of the Secretary of Co-operation and Development and subject to whatever conditions he may impose. A similar restriction applies to foreign Africans in the rural non-prescribed area in terms of section 26 of the (S.A.) Black Labour Act. However, in terms of section 13 of the (S.A.) Black (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, foreign Africans may be employed, without special permission but under contract, in the mining industry and in other industries or classes of employment as may be specified by notice in the Government Gazette.

To date there have been no other industries or classes of employment which have been thus specified and, with the presently high and growing levels of local unemployment, it is highly unlikely that any will be in the future. But it is quite evident that, at least until 1976 (and probably still at present), there were large numbers of foreign Africans employed on contracts in sectors other than mining (see Table 2.2 and Appendix A Table A;

cf. SAIRR: 1978: 223; 1979: 177-8). Each of these labourers (72 802 of them in June 1976) must theoretically have obtained individual written permission to be contracted, whatever the conditions of his employment.

There is a defined procedure for the granting of such permission, but to workers from Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland only, and then only as a supplement to local labour supplies. If the relevant District Labour Bureau is satisfied that no local labour is available, approval for the employment of foreign Africans is given through the issue of a 'no objection' certificate. Such a certificate will be granted for the recruitment of a specified number of workers who must be men (Breytenbach: 1972: 42; Clarke: 1977a: 8).

Until 1978 some larger companies, notably in the construction industry, were thus able to recruit and employ contract labour from Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, and they managed to obtain permission to recruit batches of foreign African workers on a block basis. This, I was told, was by arrangement with the Co-operation and Development (previously Plural Relations and before that Bantu Affairs) Commissioners in the areas in which the labourers were first to be employed, although once on strength the men were often moved from one site to another including sites in the Western Cape where foreign African labour has not been allowed since 1958 (Breytenbach: 1972: 42). Requests were made for permission to recruit foreign labour in batches of specified numbers from a specified one of these three states. These requests were justified by claims that such labour was to be used in construction associated with the mining industry (e.g. hostel construction), that road and dam building could well be classed with mining and quarrying, or merely that local labour was not available.

A senior personnel official in one company has told me that during the years until about 1976 Commissioners agreed quite readily to allow up to 120 labourers at a time to be recruited and brought in from Lesotho. By 1977, however, they were often more hesitant and first consulted nearby rural labour bureaux to check on the availability of local labour. But, in the personnel official's words, the decision of the Commissioner often appeared to depend "on the spin of a coin". Since 1978, however, all new recruitment of foreign African labour in non-mining sectors has been blocked and even re-recruitment of personnel who have been re-contracted regularly over the past five, ten or even twenty years is being made extremely difficult.

Foreign African contract labourers, whether in the mining industry or in other employment with the written permission of the Secretary, must be repatriated at least once every two years, although new contracts may then be attested (Breytenbach: 1972: 43). This 'two year rule' is in terms of a policy decision taken in 1963 (Horrell: 1971: 56). But Basotho employed on contract in the construction industry were limited to one year contracts only, having to be repatriated annually. If their services were then still required they could be re-attested once they had returned to Lesotho. This is in line with the restrictions on the employment of local African contract labour in terms of regulations promulgated in 1968 (see Memorandum: 1974; Wilson: 1972: 221-31). Furthermore, a call-in card system, like the one used for the re-attestation of local African contract labour, was used in the case of Basotho in the construction industry.

Basotho in the mining industry, on the other hand, are attracted to re-engage by a bonus and re-engagement guarantee system and they are limited to service periods of up to two years. Few



remain for that length of time, however. For example, in 1976 61% of the gold miners from Lesotho returned home after service periods of 6 to 14 months, while the mean period of their service was 10,6 months. Only 13% of the Basotho on the gold mines that year remained there for between 18 and 24 months (van der Wiel: 1977: 43-4: Tables 16 and 17).

Most labour migrants from Lesotho are employed in the mining industry on a contract basis in terms of section 13 of the (S.A.) Black (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act. In 1976 there were 129 533 Basotho on the mines, out of a total of 152 188 Basotho who were labour migrants in South Africa - i.e. 85,1% of the Basotho legally employed in South Africa were miners (SAIRR: 1977: 210; RP 26-1977: p. 105). Aggregate figures of Basotho employed in other sectors in South Africa are not available but extrapolations of limited survey statistics give an indication of the distribution of Basotho in various different classes of employment in South Africa.

Table 2.2 Proportions (extrapolated) of labour migrants from Lesotho, by sector of employment in South Africa, 1975

<u>Sector of employment</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Mining	81
Manufacturing	7
Construction	3
Domestic Work	5
Government	2
Agriculture	1
Other	1
Total	100

(For sources P.T.O.)

Source: van der Wiel (1977: 22: Table 6). Data derived from three socio-economic surveys conducted in three different parts of Lesotho, 1974-6. N = not given; but there were 1 759 households from which data were collected.

An indication of the distribution of foreign African labour in the various sectors of employment in South Africa is given in Appendix A, Table A.5. The table also indicates the increasing proportional importance of Lesotho's contribution to the mining industry's foreign African labour force: In 1974 Basotho constituted 29,8% of that labour force while by 1976 the Lesotho contingent made up 40,8% of the foreign Africans working in the mining industry. By June 1978 Lesotho nationals accounted for 49,1% of the foreign Black labour force in Chamber of Mines affiliated mines (Chamber of Mines: Human Resources Laboratory) and in December 1978 they accounted for 50,7% of the foreign African labourers employed by members of and contractors to TEBA which recruits primarily for the mines (TEBA: 1979: 18). This proportional growth is associated with the decrease in numbers of foreign Africans being recruited since the Malawi miners' air crash in 1974 and Mozambican independence the following year. Furthermore, it has been Chamber of Mines' policy to increase recruitment of South African Black labour and thus to displace foreign African labour. Clarke (1977b: 23-4) has pointed out that, during 1977, it was the Chamber's Mine Labour Organisation's strategy to increase the proportion of labour from Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (B.L.S.) from 32% to 35% of the total African mine labour force while simultaneously decreasing the overall proportion of foreign African labour from 54% to 50% in that same year. This meant that the B.L.S. proportion of the foreign African labour supply would have had to increase. This does not appear to have

happened however. Whereas in January 1977 the B.L.S. contingent made up 32,8% of the total Chamber of Mines affiliated mines' African labour force, in January 1978 this proportion had dropped to 29,9%. Nevertheless, the total proportion of foreigners dropped from 52,7% to 47,1% over the same 12 month period (Chamber of Mines' Human Resources Laboratory).

Basotho employed in South Africa in non-mining sectors can be divided into three groups: (i) A minority who were in lawful employment and legally resident in a prescribed area as of 1 July 1963. They were then granted the right to remain so employed and to remain resident in the respective prescribed areas in which they were employed as long as they continued with the same employer; (ii) A larger number of contract workers - in both the prescribed and non-prescribed (rural) areas - who must be repatriated at least every second year, even if only to be re-enlisted immediately; and (iii) An undetermined number of persons who have entered South Africa and have taken up employment illegally (in terms of the prevailing South African legislation). Their security of employment and residence in South Africa is extremely precarious, as they may be arrested and deported. Those in the first category, although not subject to the 'two year rule', do not have rights of permanent residence, however, and they must return to Lesotho upon retirement or if they lose their present jobs. Those in the second category are treated much like South African contract labourers, under section 10(1)(d) of the (S.A.) Black (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, in that they cannot be tenants of urban houses, and ought to reside in hostels. They can therefore never become permanent residents, either with or without their families, at their places of work.<sup>9</sup>

Perry (1977: 154) has said of labour migrants from Lesotho: "A man's working life in South Africa always has the restricting horizon that no matter how well he does, nor how hard he toils, he must one day return to Lesotho." There is indeed a marked lack of security in employment for all Basotho who are labour migrants in South Africa, whether or not they are employed on the mines and whether or not they are in South Africa legally. This is exacerbated by the fact that no state pensions are paid in Lesotho although some retired workers do receive pensions through their ex-employers. For most Basotho, then, rural and agricultural resources, especially land, are seen to offer an important source of security and one which is keenly sought after. As one informant, at home between contracts for mine labour said:

It may happen at some time that I become sick while I am at work. I will then be unable to send any money home. But if we have fields which have been ploughed they (at home) may even get a bag of beans.

#### 4. Lesotho's Land Laws

Access to, and the allocation of land in Lesotho is governed by a comprehensive set of land laws, as set out in the Laws of Lerotholi, and elaborated by more recent legislation. There is no individual ownership of land in Lesotho, whether it be residential, arable or pasture land. Individuals can, however, gain usufruct rights over residential and arable land while usufruct over pasturage is normally vested in a community under the administration of a chief or headman (cf. Sheddick: 1954: 5-11). Our concern here is with the allocation of, and access to, usufruct rights over arable land.

Administrative title to all land in its area of jurisdiction is held by the local chieftaincy which, in consultation with a

development (land) committee - elected and appointed in terms of the (L.S.) Land Act (No. 20 of 1973) and the (L.S.) Land Regulations 1974 (Legal Notice No. 9 of 1974) - is responsible for the allocation of arable lots to qualifying individuals.<sup>10</sup> Qualification entails accepting the administrative jurisdiction of the local chieftaincy, paying tax in that chieftaincy's area and being a married male Mosotho. Although there is no provision for widows to be allocated fields, this does occasionally occur, while widows of deceased landowners are entitled to retain usufructuary rights over their husbands' fields. More recently unmarried mothers have occasionally been considered for allocations although, again, there is no provision for this in law. A further, implicit, prerequisite for the allocation of arable land is that the applicant has previously been allocated a residential site in the area of the chieftaincy in which fields are requested and resides in a homestead on that site. Allocation of residential land is subject to conditions of allegiance to the chieftaincy similar to those for the allocation of arable lots.

Each married man is customarily entitled to three fields plus a further two for each additional wife. But scarcity of land is such that this ideal is now only rarely achieved: The 1970 Census of Agriculture Report shows that those households with arable land held a mean of 2.17 fields each (Lesotho: 1972: 43: Table 1.0421). In 1960, 8.5% of all households in the country were landless while in 1970 this figure had risen to 12.7% (Williams: 1972: 3; Lesotho: 1972: 30: Table 1.8). Williams (1972: 3) has pointed out, furthermore, that in 1960 a total of 24% of the country's elementary families were landless, although many were based in larger households which did hold land.<sup>11</sup>

Once usufructuary rights have been gained, security of tenure

is lifelong provided two important although flexibly interpreted conditions, based on clauses in the Laws of Lerotholi (Part I, 7(2) and 7(3)), are met. These are: (a) That the landholder does not, in the opinion of the chief and development committee, have more fields than are needed for his household's subsistence; and (b) That the field is not, without adequate reason, left unworked for two or more successive years. With the very low yields presently being obtained, the first condition is unlikely to be activated. Over twenty years ago Sheddick (1954: 77) suggested that the period of grace in terms of the second condition might extend to four or five years. Murray (1976a: 92) has more recently said that these provisions are only infrequently enforced and although I did not come across any cases of deprivation of fields, informants suggested that a household was likely to lose its field if there had been no attempt to work it during the third ploughing season after the last time it had been worked. It is with this potential sanction in mind that landholders must consider annually whether or not to work their fields.

That usufructuary title over arable land is not inheritable is explicit in the Sesotho maxim 'mobu ha se lefa': scil (arable land) is not an inheritance. There is thus no provision in Sesotho law for the inheritance of arable land rights, and on the death of a landholder or his wife (whoever dies last) their fields revert to the chieftaincy for re-allocation. The subsistence needs of adult sons' households do, nevertheless, take nominal priority in such re-allocations. As Hamnett (1975: 78) has pointed out, "a son has a legitimate expectation to be given his father's lands (or some of them or equivalent lands), and this expectation, moreover, is recognized in customary law." (cf. Poulter: 1976: 249-54).

There are thus two apparently contradictory principles in

customary land law in Lesotho: That land is not inheritable; and that sons, especially first sons, can expect to be allocated their deceased parents' fields. Hamnett (1975: 77-82) has most ably discussed the reconciliation, in litigation, of this apparent contradiction. Invoking what has been called "an attractive general argument about the nature of customary law, that a logical contradiction obtains only when such principles are regarded independently of particular sets of circumstances" (Murray: 1976a: 95), Hamnett (1975) has shown that it is the particular set of circumstances pertaining in each case of litigation which directs the resolution of disputes arising from this apparent contradiction.

It is precisely because of the weight of circumstance in such conflict resolution, however, that attempts may be made to forestall this contingency (cf. Murray: 1976a: 96-9: cases 3.1 and 3.2). By encouraging his father to transfer his arable rights to him, a son - and more especially a younger son - is attempting to gain arable rights for himself while hoping to avoid possible litigation following the death of both his parents. In cases following the re-allocation of a deceased's fields to households other than those of his sons, the outcome of litigation will depend, among other factors, on the relationship of the deceased's sons to the local chief and development committee members. For a younger man who is absent as a labour migrant, this relationship may be rather tenuous and may be a factor in such litigation going against his claims. In cases where the dispute is between the first-born and another son of the deceased, the younger son is likely to lose unless he can convincingly show that it is only he (or the money he has remitted) that has worked his father's fields and supported his father's household during the years preceding his parents' death, and that the older brother has totally

neglected their parents.

It is such filial support, and the promise that it will continue, that is used to encourage older men and women to transfer their arable rights to their sons; and it is the hope of such transfers being made which, at least in part, motivates sons to offer and provide such support from their own wage earnings. For many older people, moreover, a promise of support may hold out more hope of security in their old age than does the usufructuary rights they hold over arable land, especially if they do not themselves have the resources to work those lands. They may thus be prepared to transfer their fields to a son who provides such support.

Of course, this type of re-allocation of fields requires the approval of the chieftaincy and the development committee. An older man residing permanently at home is quite likely to have a fairly cordial relationship with members of the local development committee, some of whom may well be his own peers.<sup>12</sup> This may facilitate the transfer of some or all of his land to one or more of his sons, an action which in turn avoids their having possibly to enter litigation after his death.

Such transfers of arable land rely on the interpretation of certain clauses in the Laws of Lerotholi. Part I,7(2) of those laws provides for the withdrawal of usufructuary rights over arable land from those who hold fields in excess of their needs and the re-allocation of such rights to those with insufficient arable land. The transfer of arable rights from father to son (or other junior kinsman) uses this provision, with the father voluntarily conceding to having superfluous fields and recommending to the local land authority that all or part of his land be re-allocated to his son. Fathers may in fact attempt to



distribute their respective landholdings amongst their various sons in order to gain access to some of each of these sons' remitted earnings. This process may lead to the fragmentation of fields.

Murray (1976a: 95-6), referring to this type of transfer, has suggested that:

- (i) "such an arrangement ... typically occurs at a stage in the developmental cycle when the father has ceased to migrate himself;"
- (ii) "(since) successful cultivation requires considerable cash investment, a man can exert little "pull" over the junior generation by merely retaining his lands ... if he does not also have an independent source of income;" and
- (iii) "(a man may thus) prefer to transfer nominal title in the lands ... to his sons and commit himself to dependence on them in his declining years."

These points are certainly most revealing, but they create a static impression of these transfers which can better be understood as processes. They are, indeed, a function both of a man's - and for that matter, a woman's - life cycle and of the developmental cycle of the household in which he resides, and this itself is closely related to the household head's wage earning capacity as a labour migrant. But it is not only that older people transfer their usufructuary rights to their sons, and sometimes daughters, in order to gain a share of their children's remittances. They also use their potential to make such transfers as bargaining counters in becoming recipients of some of these remittances. The younger men, for their part, are wage earners who must gain access to fields for their own future security, but they too have a bargaining counter in respect of their earnings.

This dissertation is concerned, among other things, with the strategies used to gain access both to land and to remitted earnings over the developmental cycle. But before going on to examine these issues, an introduction is needed to the people

among whom fieldwork was conducted, to the villages in which they live and to the area in which these are located.

University of Cape Town

### III THE LOCAL SETTING

Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng, where fieldwork was conducted, are two adjacent settlements (villages) in the Orange River valley of the Qacha's Nek district in Lesotho. For many years the mountain barrier separating this district from Maseru, Lesotho's administrative capital in the lowlands, has effectively isolated the district from the rest of the country. Without any all-weather roads linking Qacha's Nek with the lowlands, the only direct means of transport was by air. Most vehicular travellers were, therefore, obliged to traverse South African territory, re-entering Lesotho via the commercial centre of Matatiele which today lies in a corridor of 'White' South Africa between blocks of Transkeian territory. Part of this route crossed Transkeian land and, with that region's 'independence' in October 1976, problems of transit rights were encountered. The result has been recent grants of foreign aid to Lesotho to build an all-weather road linking Qacha's Nek with the lowlands via the foothills town of Quthing (Moyeni) in the south west of the country.

There has been a close link between the districts of Matatiele and Qacha's Nek since the time of the Gun War (1880-1) when Basotho from Matatiele migrated across the border ridge into the Qacha's Nek area and the Orange River valley.<sup>13</sup> This continued after the establishment of Qacha's Nek as an administrative district of Basutoland, in 1888. The relationship has persisted to the present, in spite of the separation of the two districts by a national boundary which falls across pasture land which people from both sides effectively share. Kinship and affinal bonds between residents of the two areas as well as language and cultural links - in the face of relatively tense relations with

the Xhosa speakers who predominate in the Transkei - have further reinforced their close ties.

Since October 1976 there have been tensions across the border but, in spite of the difficulties encountered by Basotho in transit through Transkeian territory to Matatiele,<sup>14</sup> the Qacha's Nek district was still a part of the commercial hinterland of Matatiele during my earlier period of fieldwork in 1976/7. Bus services in the district still made their way across the border to that town, the nearest railhead, while most imports came from wholesale and retail outlets there. Labour migrants, too, were still being forwarded through Matatiele although - during late 1976 - the flow was interrupted by misunderstanding and inadequate provision by the South African authorities for the granting of the necessary visas for entry into South Africa. When I returned to the field in summer 1978/9, things were noticeably changed. There were two regular bus services operating between Qacha's Nek and Quthing, one going on to Maseru. Labour migrants were using this route to enter South Africa through border posts with the Orange Free State, and there was only minimal traffic, of non-Lesotho nationals only, across the border gate at Qacha's Nek. Two new wholesale outlets in Qacha's Nek provided merchandise for the retailers of the district, although most of this continued to be supplied from over the border in Matatiele.

Qacha's Nek is administered as a district of Lesotho by officials appointed in Maseru. Since the opening of the new all-weather road linking the district with the lowlands it has come to fall increasingly into the area of Maseru's commercial as well as administrative influence. Until recently, however, the district appeared to have been regarded as a distant outpost of relatively small consequence. People there complained that their

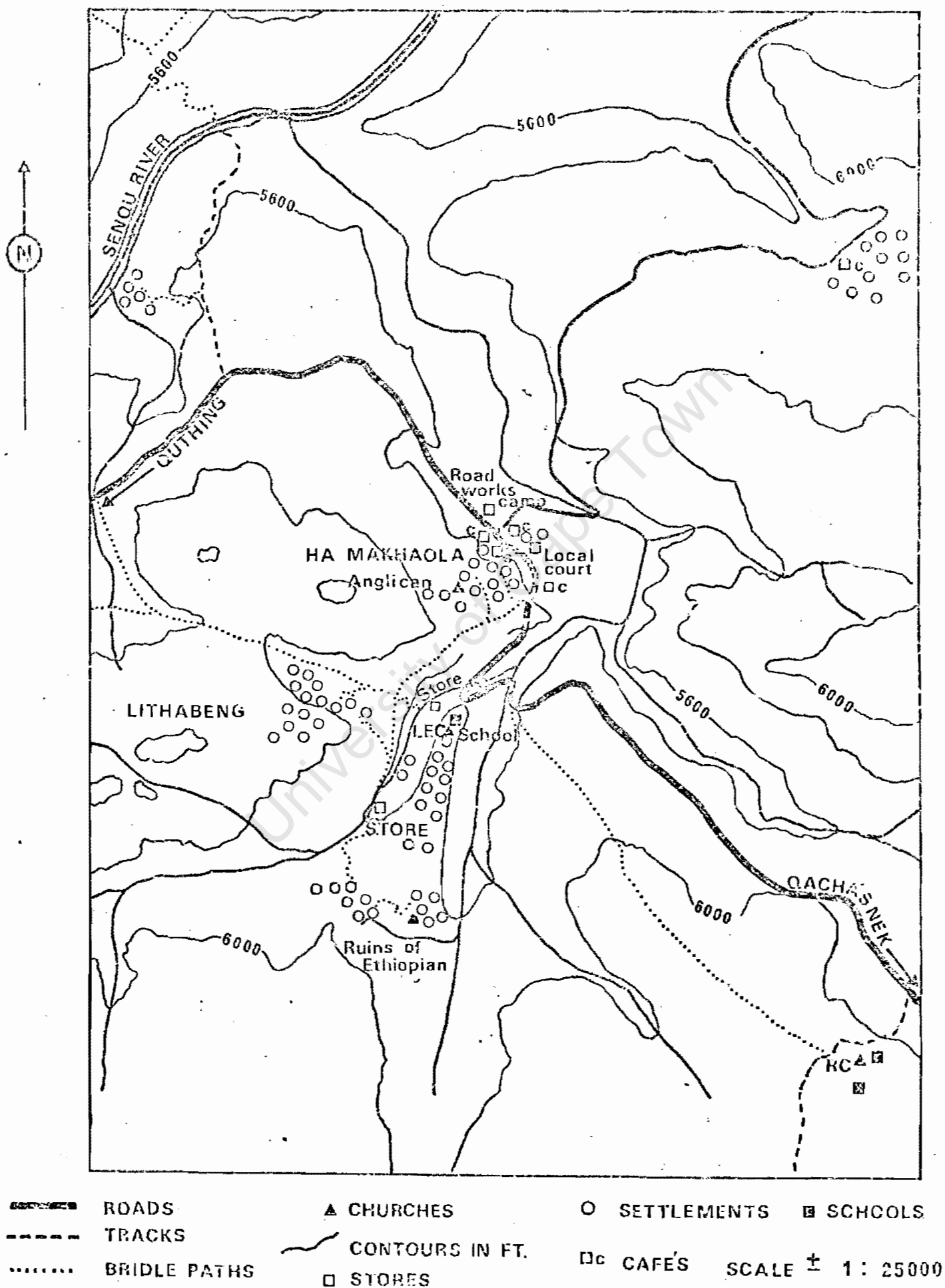
district was being passed by as regards the country's development projects which have indeed been concentrated in other areas of the country, especially in the heavily populated lowlands. The border dispute since Transkeian 'independence' has, however, turned attention to Qacha's Nek, and projects in addition to road-building have been mooted for the area.

### 1. The Villages and their Surrounds

I conducted fieldwork, between October 1976 and April 1977 and during December 1978 and January 1979, in two adjacent villages which I have called Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng. These two villages lie a short distance from the Senqu (Orange River) on the northern slopes of two parallel ridges between that river and one of its smaller tributaries. Ha Makhaola, the home of the area chieftainess, is situated alongside the only main road (all-weather gravel surface) in the west of the district, at a major junction on the road. At the time of my preliminary census in October/November 1976 it had a de jure<sup>15</sup> population of 224 persons residing in 39 homesteads. Lithabeng, which then had a de jure population of 272 persons in 44 homesteads, is a fifteen minute walk away from Ha Makhaola. It is set away from the road, overlooking the old bridle path along which some pedestrian travellers still make their way to and from Qacha's Nek town and the settlements further west along the lower reaches of the Senqu. Although Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng are thus spatially separated into two distinct settlements, their close proximity and the fact that their residents regard themselves as of one community has allowed me to treat them together as one unit with a population of 496 persons resident in 83 homesteads.

Most of the fields held by residents of these two villages

Map 2: Research Area



lie apart from the homesteads in the valleys and on the plateaux nearby; and most of the pastures on which their livestock can graze are still further afield on land too steep to cultivate. A majority of the villagers set great store by these agricultural resources although they are in fact inadequate even for primary sustenance requirements.

The immediate area around the two villages contains a number of satellite villages which, like Lithabeng, are each administered by a headman directly responsible to the chieftainess in Ha Makhaola. The fields and pasture areas of all these villages are interspersed. In the closest of these villages there is a mission of the Lesotho Evangelical Church (L.E.C.) with an evangelist at its head. The Anglican Church has a site of its own in Ha Makhaola itself. Some distance away, but still in the chieftainess' area of jurisdiction, the Roman Catholic Church has built a large mission which includes a modern church building and a seminary. A number of Zionist-type churches operate from homesteads in the villages of the area while the ruins of an old church building, reportedly built by members of an Ethiopian-type sect, stand derelict in another nearby village. (See West (1975: 17ff.) and Sundkler (1961) for discussions of the differences between Zionist-type and Ethiopian-type independent churches.)

In and around the Ha Makhaola area there is a large South African owned store - one of a chain in the district - and a somewhat smaller but well stocked locally owned store. There are also a number of cafes-cum-beerhouses. Many villagers from across the Senqu do their shopping at these stores, the larger of which provides a ferry service at the first crossing of the river near to the road coming from Qacha's Nek town. Many travellers thus disembark here from the two daily buses passing

Ha Makhaola and stop in the village before making their way down to the ferry crossing. With the shoppers from across the Senqu, these travellers provide an important source of custom for the cafes of Ha Makhaola, for this is the last point at which refreshments are available before coming to the path which descends to the river crossing and the steep incline up which one must climb in order to reach the villages on the plateau opposite. Labour migrants on their way home also stop here, both for refreshments and in order to deposit their luggage for storage in one or other cafe at the road junction. Some even spend the night here before proceeding to their home villages where they fetch their wives and female kin to carry home their bags and boxes.

A road works camp, which has more recently become a base for major foreign-aided road improvements, lies alongside Ha Makhaola across the way from the road junction. A Local Court<sup>16</sup> is situated still closer by, directly across the main road from the line of homesteads which includes that of the chieftainess. Before the courthouse was built, the Court's 'reserve' was the site of the chief's village, but in the 1940s the Colonial Administration resettled the village on the southern side of the road so that a courthouse could be built on the land the village had occupied. Today there are again homesteads on the northern side of the road and adjacent to the Court reserve. These are ideally placed to tap the passing trade as well as that offered by litigants and observers in Local Court cases.

Ha Makhaola is the seat not only of the Local Court but also of the area chieftainess' administration. This administration includes, among other functions, an arbitration court, the local development committee and the issuing of mabeisi (stock ownership certificates) to people of the area who wish to sell, or otherwise



transfer livestock. It is thus in Ha Makhaola that villagers from the whole area under the chieftainess' jurisdiction appear to request allocations of land, to obtain mabeisi and to deal with any matters pertaining to their respective headman's administration; and it is in this village that government officials hold lipitso (general meetings) to inform the chieftainess' subjects of administrative changes, to recommend new agricultural methods etc.<sup>17</sup>

There is thus a constant flux of people in Ha Makhaola. This is rather less marked in Lithabeng, although there too travellers and other pedestrian passers-by can be found visiting in the village at most times. Ha Makhaola's status as the seat of the area chieftaincy and Local Court, and its position alongside the main road at a point most conveniently situated for small-scale trading, have resulted in recent immigration into that village, especially of widows and deserted women and their respective dependents. One thus finds members of a large variety of lineages and clans resident there whereas in Lithabeng all but two of the 44 households are of four lineages. As we shall see later, some of the younger members of the established families in the community resent this immigration and the opportunities afforded immigrants in gaining access to homestead sites and sometimes even to fields.

This notwithstanding, and in spite of the never ending coming and going of oscillating migrant villagers, the two villages together do give a feeling of community, albeit not a very tight-knit one. As Perry (1977: 7) has pointed out of a northern lowlands village: "Its people look outwards to the mines and to the wider world." This description applies as well to Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng as it does to most contemporary Lesotho villages.

But, although this open-endedness reinforces the idea that "The Basuto (sic) once led a closer community life than they now do" (Wallman: 1969: 18)<sup>18</sup>, there is still a distinct sense of community in and between the two villages. At times this extends also to include the residents of the nearer satellite villages. Not only do the people of Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng live in close spatial proximity to one another, but their fields are intermingled and they share common grazing areas. They participate together in communal work-parties and in savings-clubs with the litokofele (parties) which follow, and they call and attend beer drinks and feasts as one community. There are both affinal and agnatic links between residents of the two settlements and they effectively share one headman in that the Lithabeng headman is the principal adviser (molulo setulo = chairman) to the chieftainess in Ha Makhaola. He presides not only over his own lekhotla (court) in Lithabeng, but also over the chieftainess' lekhotla in Ha Makhaola. To the people themselves, furthermore, Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng are together one community in which "re a thusana, re a phelisana" (we help one another, we support one another).

Most of the people who co-operate thus to give this sense of community are women. Like most contemporary villages in rural Lesotho, Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng have a de facto population comprised primarily of relict women and their children. It is on these women that the continuity of the individual households and of the community as a whole depends. They are the people to whom falls the lot of household management, including both domestic chores and the management of household and agricultural resources: It is they who are to be found cooking, cleaning and caring for the children; it is they who must draw water from the

springs and carry it home in buckets balanced on their heads; it is they who must walk down to the local store or cafe to purchase the basics of their daily sustenance with money they have been sent by their absent wage-labouring husbands. It is these women, moreover, who must arrange for their fields to be ploughed and planted - by one or other of the few men who are not oscillating migrants - and these are the women who call agricultural work-parties and whom one sees weeding and harvesting the meagre crops in the fields. It is the women of these villages who participate in savings-clubs, and who brew beer for sale in their homesteads or alongside the road at the cafes which provide for the passing trade, and this they do in the hope that they may thus increase their own domestic incomes.

The basic daily routines of the village and homestead thus rest heavily on the shoulders of the women. The monotony of these duties is broken annually by the various tasks of the agricultural cycle and by the different chores to be done as the seasons change. The annual influx of visiting labour migrants around the time of Christmas brings a welcome diversion from the routine (cf. Murray: 1976a: 309-10). But having her husband at home does inevitably add to a married woman's work around the homestead.

Other festivals, both religious and secular, are celebrated during the year, Easter (Paseka) and Lesotho's Independence Day (Boipuso) being two of the more important occasions. It is the year-end period around Christmas (Keresemese) and New Year (Nibijara), however, which is the most popular time for celebrations of various kinds. Many feasts (meketi; sing. = moketi) are held then, and this time of the year is popular also for both male and female initiation lodges so that these will not interfere with secular education timetables. The coming out ceremony of

the makoloane (new male initiates) arouses the excitement of all the villagers, especially those visiting migrants who are themselves initiates.

The vast majority of the population claims nominal adherence to one or another of the Christian churches operating in Lesotho although participation in church affairs is quite limited (cf. Spiegel: 1975b: 27ff.). Clerics, often of more than one denomination, officiate at most funerals, while most infants are baptized. With the close links between church and formal schooling, moreover, most children receive at least a basic socialization in the ideas of Christianity. I did not collect data specifically on religious beliefs and practices but it was clear that they are quite syncretistic. The importance of the shades and 'tradition' is stressed along with Christian teachings and the two are seen to complement one another. Thus, although feasts are held in honour of the dead -- following sacrifices of animals 'to accompany the deceased' -- the preliminaries always include a prayer in the name of Jesus: The local L.E.C. evangelist was present as an honoured guest at all the feasts I attended during my earlier stay in the field.

## 2. Population

Most rural villages in Lesotho today have depleted adult populations. This is a result primarily, but not solely, of the necessity for people to migrate on an oscillating basis in order to find wage employment. Thus one finds that most men and many women are in wage labour away from their homes for large portions of their working lives.

When I took a village census in October/November 1976, the total de jure<sup>19</sup> population of the two villages was 496 people

living in 83 households. Among these people were 137 adult males and 160 adult females (16 years and older). Table A.6 (Appendix A) gives an age breakdown of the adult population by sex. Using the ages of 16 and 55 years as limits in defining 'working age' we see from that table that a total of 116 men and 121 women were of working age. Twelve boys and nine girls in this category were, however, still attending school.

Of the total population of 496 persons, 152 (30,6%) were absent at the time of my census, thus leaving the two villages with a de facto population of 344 persons. The absentees included not only labour migrants but also scholars, people visiting friends or relatives and others who were temporarily away from the village for a variety of personal reasons (ka mabaka = by/for reasons, causes).

Various recent writers have provided synchronic figures of absenteeism from rural villages in various parts of the country. These suggest that the absentee rate at any one time is of the order of 20% of the total population of rural villages<sup>20</sup>. The absentee rate in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng was found to be higher than this: 123 adults, comprising 24,8% of the total population and 41,4% of the adult population, were away from the two villages at the time of my census. Among these 123 adult absentees were 81 men (59,1% of the adult males)<sup>21</sup> and 42 women (26,3% of the adult females). There were a further 29 children (15 years and younger) who were also absent from the villages at the same time. Most of them were in Lesotho, either at schools where they boarded or with their parents (or mothers) at the places where their mothers were employed; a few were with their parents in South Africa.

In addition to those who were absent there were a further

ten adult men who, although they were present in the two villages at the time of my census, were at home only between wage-labour contracts in South Africa. By van der Wiel's definition (1977: 16; see my Chapter III, note 15 above) these men were oscillating labour migrants. We might thus include them with our figures for adult absentees, which would then be 91 men and 42 women - i.e. 133 adults, comprising 44,8% of the total adult population and 26,8% of the whole population, were absentees.

Virtually all of these absentees came home to the village only occasionally, either between labour contracts or when they were granted leave. Quite often these visits home were arranged to coincide with the Christmas holiday period and at that time of the year the villages seemed quite full. A few people were able to be at home in the village regularly at weekends. Four men and three women who were employed nearby in the district and along the main road were able thus to come home at weekends, as were those children who were at school in Qacna's Nek town. The other children who boarded farther away came home only during school vacations.

There were 69 men from Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng who migrated recurrently between Lesotho and South Africa, all but one of them being in wage-labour employment. Nineteen women from the two villages were also migrants in South Africa, but only ten of these were reported as being wage-labourers. The other nine were apparently unemployed or in self-employment as petty traders.

A total of 125 men and 151 women had completed their schooling by the time of my village census. Table 3.1 shows us the levels of education achieved by these adults while Tables A.7 and A.8 (Appendix A) give a further breakdown by age-categories.

Table 3.1 Educational levels of post-school village adult males and females: 1976

Years of schooling	Males		Females		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nil	23	18,4	25	17,5	48	17,9
1-4	30	24,0	18	12,6	48	17,9
5-7	39	31,2	64	44,8	103	38,4
8-10	24	19,2	28	19,6	52	19,4
11+	9	7,2	8	5,6	17	6,3
Totals	125	100,0	143	100,1	268	99,9
No data	-		8		8	
Totals	125		151		276	

From Table 3.1 we see that there was no significant difference in the proportions of men and women who had had no formal schooling (18,4% and 17,5% respectively). Nor was there a significant difference in the proportions of men and women who had reached the higher levels of education of eight or more years of schooling (26,4% and 25,2% respectively). We may note, furthermore, that there was not a single woman and only one man over the age of 55 years who had gone beyond the seventh year of schooling while only 9 out of the 78 women (11,5%) and 8 out of the 58 men (13,8%) over 35 years of age had continued beyond the seventh year at school. This suggests that those who had reached the higher levels of education (eight or more years of schooling) were predominantly younger people: Tables A.7 and A.8 show us that 75,8% of the males and 75,0% of the females who had reached this level of education were below 35 years of age. From Table 2.1 we see also that the proportions of men and women who had completed between one and seven years of schooling are not

significantly different (55,2% and 57,4% respectively). But the distribution of these between the categories one to four years of schooling and five to seven years of schooling is quite markedly different for men and women: i.e. 24,0% of the men and 12,6% of the women are in the one to four year category, and 31,2% of the men and 44,8% of the women are in the five to seven year category. This suggests that boys have been more likely than girls to leave off schooling during their lower primary years while the girls have continued on to higher primary levels. As we have seen, however, similar proportions of males and females had gone on to secondary schools and most of them were younger people.

Just 17 post-school adults (6,2% of the total) in the two villages claimed to have completed eleven or more years of formal schooling. But a further seven of the 21 younger adults who were still at school had already completed ten or more years of schooling. Five of these were young men, one of whom subsequently went on to university as did another young matriculant who, in 1976/7, was employed in a clerical position in Maseru.

### 3. The Household

#### (a) Defining the household and homestead

Murray (1976a: 54-6) has discussed the problems facing the anthropologist in the field of defining the household in rural Lesotho. This is because of the constant flux in the number of a homestead's residents as a result of their participation in the system of oscillating labour migration. He has pointed out that the household "is not a co-residential group, nor does it engage in joint activities ... Nor can it be defined by criteria of



kinship" (Murray: 1976a: 54). Starting from the quite legitimate premise that "membership of a household (is) defined in terms of a continuing responsibility to contribute towards its maintenance" he has reached the following definition of the household: "an aggregation of individuals within which are concentrated the flows of income and expenditure generated by the activities of its members" (Murray: 1976a: 54). This definition is slightly ambiguous, however, in that it may equally well be describing the rural community at large if we allow for less intense relationships. With this proviso, we can nevertheless fruitfully use it. It is not, however, a definition of a tangible and immediately observable unit such as the homestead site. Murray describes the homestead as "the area occupied by those members of the household who are resident in Lesotho" (Murray: 1976a: 55). It is this homestead (or homestead site) which has first to be identified in the field in order that data can be obtained about the household. While I was in the field I did not define the homestead and household as explicitly as Murray has done, but in essence I used these concepts much as he has. There were times, however, when I was unable to check on the extent to which certain individuals were participating in the maintenance of their households. I then had merely to rely on my respective respondent's perceptions of her/his household's boundaries. Often these were related to jural rights of residence in a homestead.

A purely spatial definition of the homestead (or homestead site) like that above is useful for purposes of recording household membership in the field. But it does not tell us anything of the dynamics of the homestead's growth as its occupying household grows and matures. As domestic development proceeds, so the homestead is built up. In order to examine this process our

definition of the homestead must be extended.

Unlike Murray (1976a), Sheddick (1954) failed to recognize the importance of wage labour earnings in the interactions between members of a household. He failed also to account for the frequency of intermittent absences of members of most households. He thus conceptualized the household rather statically in terms of both co-residence in the homestead and co-operation in domestic and agricultural activities: "The household inhabiting a single homestead is the primary unit for economic co-operation" (ibid:8lff.). Sheddick's further discussion of 'economic' co-operation revolves primarily around agricultural activities, referring only in passing to cash earnings when used for the hire of plough teams.

But Sheddick's discussion of the homestead is quite useful especially when he refers to the rights of the inhabitants of the homestead. He comments that the homestead is not only "the basic residential unit ... (consisting) usually of a group of huts or houses ... linked together to form a single habitation;" it is also "a complex of rights of access to natural resources such as fuel, water and building materials, fields to cultivate, space for stock byres and grazing for stock" (ibid: 16). These rights, he points out later, "are given overt expression in its (the household's) possession and occupation of a homestead site" (ibid: 18). I would add that the realization of any of these rights is a further expression of any other of the household's rights which have not yet been realized. Thus the household's rights to local resources are increasingly secured as its access to other resources is established: i.e. as the homestead is further consolidated.

The homestead is probably best understood as the material manifestation of the household and its rights. It includes all

the material resources of the household's members. Sheddick's definition of the homestead is thus not entirely adequate for it excludes the household members themselves - or, more specifically, their labour power and enterprise.<sup>22</sup> On the one hand that labour power may provide access to the all important resource of wage earnings. This is the one resource to which the household cannot claim access by right. On the other hand, it is through their labour power and enterprise that social relations of co-operation<sup>23</sup> are created and cemented in the local community. Without these it is unlikely that the household's rights to local resources could be realized, and thus the homestead building process depends upon them.

I return later to the ways in which households establish co-operative arrangements and consolidate their security in their home community. Here I merely document some of the demographic data relating to households in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng.

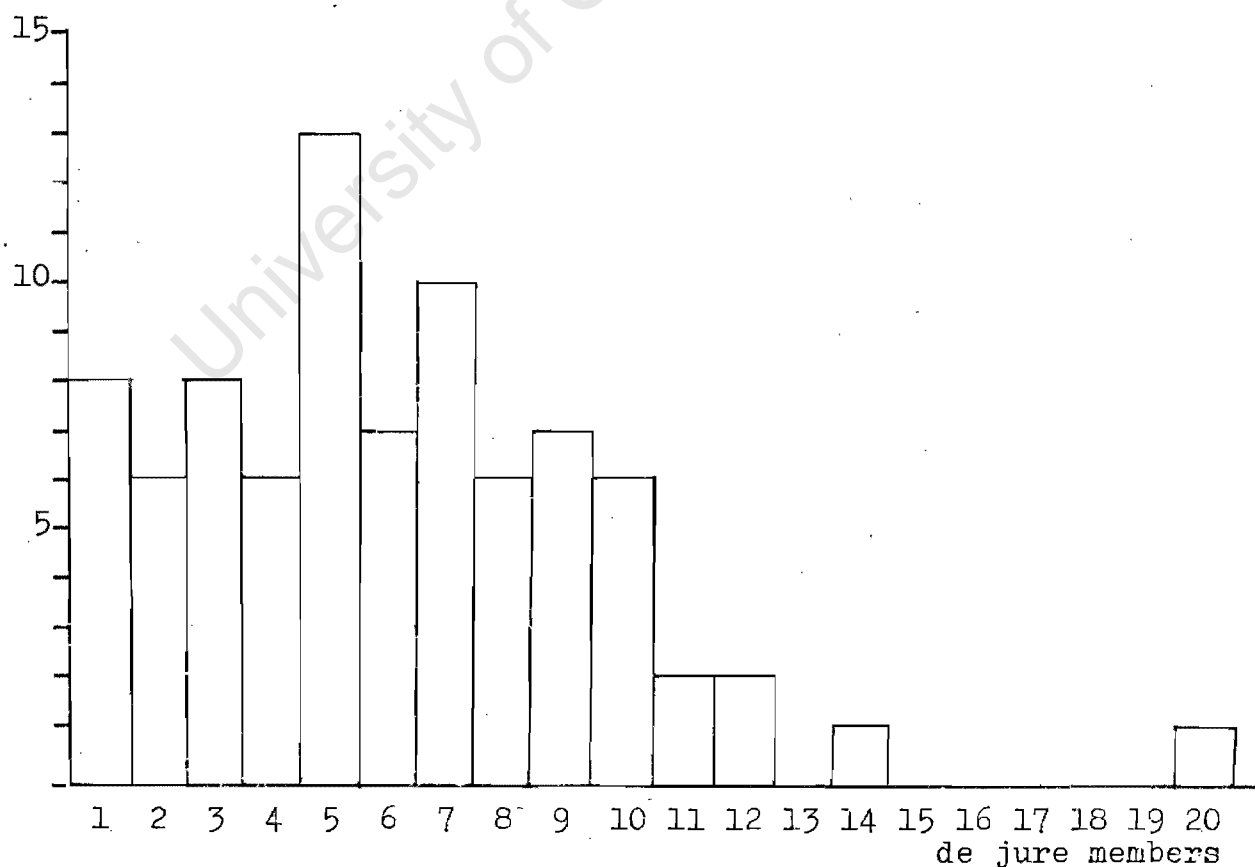
#### (b) Household population

The mean recorded population per homestead was 5,98 persons; the range in household size was one to twenty members. In his sample of 150 households in three ecological zones Murray (1976a: 163: Table 4.5) found a range in household size of one to twelve persons, while the mean population per household in that sample was 5,09 persons (ibid: 59: Table 2.1). Murray has shown also that, for his sample, the frequency distribution of households by number of members had three distinct modes at 2, 6 and 9 persons (ibid: 146; 163: Fig. 4.2). My own census revealed a rather different deviation from the normal curve, as shown in Figure 3.1. Just as in Murray's data, however, there was a fairly low statistical prominence of the nuclear family as a feature of the social

structure of Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng. Only 13 out of 83 households (15,7%) comprised nuclear families with examples of the three dyadic relationships - conjugal, maternal and paternal - which are said to characterize the nuclear family (ibid: 143ff.).<sup>24</sup> Two of these 13 households, furthermore, included temporary unrelated residents at the time of my census - a herder in one; two 'visiting' children in the other. In Murray's sample, 18% of the households comprised families defined thus as nuclear (ibid: 146; 165: Table 4.7).

Figure 3.1      Frequency distribution of 83 village households  
by number of de jure household members

No. of  
H/holds



Of the 83 household heads in the two villages 55 (66,3%) were men and 28 (33,7%) were women. Table A.9 (Appendix A) gives a breakdown of the ages and degree of education of these household heads; Table A.11 shows their marital status. The number of female household heads might well have been higher (by up to eight) if the old widow of some deceased male household heads had claimed jural headship of their households rather than attributing this status to their respective wage-earning sons or, in two cases, grandsons. In three of these cases the old women were so feeble that they could not have been effective household heads, even jurally. In fact one died during my stay in the village. Nevertheless, some of their respective households' fields were still technically in their names, having not been formally transferred to one of their sons.

A further two households recorded as male-headed might also have been regarded as female-headed: One was occupied intermittently by a relict woman who had taken up illegal employment in Natal. Her children were deceased and her husband, who was still regarded as the jural household head, had apparently become an absconder (lechepna), and had not returned home for some years. The other was the homestead of a polygynist's first wife whom he had reportedly deserted in favour of his second wife whose homestead was nearby. Both were recorded as jurally headed by the husband. If we take these ten households into account as potentially female-headed households, the figures for male and female household heads might have read 45 (54,2%) and 38 (45,8%) respectively.

The propensity to attribute household headship to a widow's son was higher in Lithabeng than in Ha Makhaola. This was possibly because, with a history of lineage continuity in Lithabeng

which did not exist to the same extent in Ha Makhaola, attribution of household headship to a younger male member of the household did not constitute as much of a threat in Lithabeng as it might have done in Ha Makhaola. Furthermore, as I pointed out above, Ha Makhaola is a convenient village to which to immigrate, especially for deserted and widowed women, so there were that many more households there without an adult male son to whom to attribute jural household headship. These two factors were reflected in the fact that a significantly larger proportion of households in Ha Makhaola than in Lithabeng were recorded as having female jural heads - i.e. 43,6% (17 households) in Ha Makhaola and 25% (11 households) in Lithabeng. The second of these two factors accounts also for the fact that of the eight single-person households in the two villages, six were in Ha Makhaola; four of these six were occupied by older widowed or deserted women.

In 13 of the 28 households (46,4%) with a female household head there was no adult male member whatever. These were, in all senses thus, woman-headed and woman-dominated households. But these de jure figures do not present a picture of the actual degree to which women were effectively managers of their rural households. In 27 cases of households headed jurally by men, that man - often the only adult male resident - was absent almost all year round. Effectively these households too were thus female-headed, although in three cases the women were also absent for most of the year and the homesteads were left unoccupied. There were no cases, however, where an old male household head was too feeble to manage his own household's affairs. In de facto terms, then, there were some 52 households which were managed - if not jurally headed - by women: i.e. 62,7% of all the households in

the two villages. Leeuwenberg (1977: 13) has said that 67% of the rural households in the Transkei in 1974 were woman-headed, including in this figure those households with absent rural male heads. Murray (1978: 13) includes a comparable figure of 70% for a lowlands Lesotho village in 1974.

University of Cape Town

#### IV PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES

##### 1. Agriculture

I discussed earlier the lack of security in employment facing an oscillating wage-labour migrant in South Africa. Agricultural property, and especially arable fields, are perceived by most Basotho to offer an alternative source of security, a point which many recent writers on Lesotho have stressed (see, inter alia, Wallman: 1969: 107; Hamnett: 1975: 66; Perry: 1977: 154). This does not necessarily mean, however, that arable agriculture, as presently practised, can provide a viable alternative to wage-earnings as a source of sustenance for rural Basotho. Ultimately, most Basotho perceive the land as potentially offering an alternative to wages. But their security lies in their perception of the potential and not in its realization. As has been pointed out: "Land still forms an ultimate form of security even for those who have no present need for it" (Hamnett: 1975: 66; my emphasis).

That alongside wage-labour "Agriculture is a rather feeble extra limb whose vigour depends on the constant infusion of cash from outside the country" has been most ably demonstrated by Murray (1976a: 131). My own data reinforce this conclusion for without receipts of remitted wage-earnings, much agricultural activity could not even have been initiated. There were a few households which had no direct access to remitted earnings and which were able to work their own fields on their own initiative. But they too had to rely on indirect access to wage-earned income in order to continue in agriculture. The first part of this section shows that agricultural yields were nowhere near the level of food requirements and that, at best, they provided a small supplement to purchased foodstuffs.



By the early 1960s Wallman had already observed that agricultural yields in the lowlands area in which she worked were totally inadequate even for minimum subsistence requirements:

The majority of villagers reap so much less than the twenty bags a year officially reckoned to provide minimum subsistence for a family of five that many expect their whole harvest to be eaten in the first few weeks of winter ... (Wallman: 1969: 66-7).

Although, in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng, harvests - in an average to good year - were expected to last for longer than just 'a few weeks', the dependence on wages to provide immediate sustenance was quite marked. Records of purchases kept during the fieldwork period as well as estimates of monthly household expenditure in 1976, made by a number of women, indicated that throughout the year there was a need to budget for the purchase of some foodstuffs from the local stores and cafes. But all respondents passed comments such as that of one woman who said "We must still go to the shop to buy things like fish (canned), sugar and tea and also 'mela (germinated sorghum for brewing beer)."

Most households, furthermore, had no alternative but to buy their staple maize meal in most months of the year, and this required their receipt of remittances. Even those households which did obtain a small yield from the fields needed a cash income to underpin their agricultural activity. This was especially important for those households which did not have the necessary networks or resources for mutual help contracts and had to rely on hiring others to plough and to plant their fields. These investments in agricultural production were often unprofitable in that yields were smaller than the amounts of produce which might otherwise have been purchased with the cash used for hiring labour, etc. This was most apparent during the rather poor agricultural season of 1976/7 during which I conducted fieldwork. (Also cf. Murray:

1976a: 129-30). But, although losses often seemed quite likely, these investments of remittances in agriculture served the long-term purpose of securing a household's access to land, and thus such losses were accepted as a normal hazard which could, in any case, be attributed to the ordinary vicissitudes of the agricultural cycle.

Livestock, too, is an area of potential investment of remitted earnings. As both Murray (1976b) and van der Wiel (1977: 80) have pointed out, a significant proportion of wage earnings is spent on the purchase of livestock and on the transfer of bride-wealth. Although livestock was perceived to be a good area of investment, it is, as Murray has pointed out, not necessarily a source of security: drought, shortages of grazing and stock theft may deplete herds severely. But it is a worthwhile area of investment if the cattle can be used, with implements owned by the stockholder, to work others' fields and thus provide a source of added income. For this the stockholder must, however, have access to herding labour, and he must have his own agricultural implements (Murray: 1976a: 73). Moreover, cattle may provide an entree to membership of a ploughing-company.

Only a few of the households in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng had herds of livestock, while 39,8% of them had no livestock at all other than possibly a few pigs and poultry. Land, on the other hand, was rather more widely held, so that just 19,3% of the households were landless. But land too was unevenly distributed with some households holding only a small single plot (sera-pana) and others having been allocated two or three larger fields (masimo). The mean number of fields held per household was 1,48 while the mean number of fields held by landholding households was 1,84. These figures may be compared with figures from the

1970 Census of Agriculture which show that the mean number of fields held by landholding households in Lesotho as a whole was 2,17. In the Qacha's Nek district there was a mean of 2,48 fields per landholding household and in the Orange River Valley zone the mean was 2,11 fields per landholding household (Lesotho: 1972: 42-3: Tables 1.0411 and 1.0421).

Table 4.1 gives a breakdown of the land and stock holdings of the Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng community. Table 4.2 gives a further breakdown of the stock holdings.

Table 4.1 Village households' livestock holdings by number of fields held

No. of fields	No. of livestock units* held by households						Totals	%
	Nil	2 or less	3-5	6-10	11-15	16+		
Nil	8	5	2	1	-	-	16	19,3
1	15	6	4	2	-	-	27	32,5
2	8	3	7	3	3	1	25	30,1
3	12	3	-	2	5	2	14	16,9
5	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1,2
Totals	33	17	13	8	9	3	83	100,0

\*One stock unit has been taken to mean one head of cattle, one horse, one donkey or five sheep or goats. Pigs and poultry are not accounted for in this unit (cf. Quirion: 1958: 71). There were no mules in the two villages.

Table 4.1 shows the number of fields held by differing proportions of the households in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng, but it fails to give any idea of the actual area of land held. I made no attempt to measure the sizes of any fields, largely because such action is often looked upon with suspicion; during an earlier field trip even my sketchings of the village layout were suspected

as being the start of an attempt 'to buy the land', and thus implicitly to oust the local usufruct holders from it. I do, nevertheless, have some figures, derived from an incomplete land register held by the development committee, which give an idea of the approximate sizes of fields. These data are presented in Appendix B, along with a discussion of the correspondence between field size, numbers of fields held and household size in Lesotho generally.

Table 4.2     Village households' cattle holdings by number of livestock held

No. of livestock units	<u>Number of cattle held</u>					Totals	%
	Nil	1-2	3-5	6-10	10+		
2 or less	9	8	-	-	-	17	20,5
3-5	4	5	4	-	-	13	15,7
6-10	1	-	3	4	-	8	9,6
11-15	-	-	2	6	1	9	10,8
16+	-	-	-	1	2	3	3,6
Totals	14	13	9	11	3	50	60,2
Households without livestock						33	39,8
						83	100,0

Table A.10 (Appendix A) gives one an idea of the average sizes of gross yields of landholding households with differing numbers of fields. It must be noted, however, that these yield figures are derived from responses by informants to questions about their harvests; I could not do any weighing of yields or counting of bags as I was not in the field during any harvest season. Most of the figures were collected by a Ha Makhaola

woman who became an assistant of mine and continued to send me data between my two field trips. These data do not include any allowances for green maize or other produce eaten before having fully ripened; nor do they include any account of the pumpkins and squashes (mekopu) harvested by a few of the more enterprising cultivators who planted them between their grain and pulse crops. Furthermore, these figures do not account for any vegetables or fruits grown in backyard gardens or in the small communal vegetable gardens introduced by a recently resident agricultural officer. A young newly trained small-scale 'progressive' farmer has recently introduced potatoes and cabbages as 'field' crops and another landholder has planted barley in his lands. Other than these exceptions, however, crops grown by the villagers were limited to maize (poone), sorghum (mabele) and beans (linaoa). Despite attempts by Ministry of Agriculture officials to introduce wheat (koro) and peas (lierekisi) as winter crops neither was grown by any members of the community.

There are four primary operations which are basic to the agricultural cycle, viz. ploughing, planting, weeding and harvesting; Turner (1978) has included threshing as equally important. Both Murray (1976a: 99-129) and Turner (1978: 257-67) have discussed in detail the types of co-operative arrangements which may be made for these operations. Murray (1976a: 127) has gone on to argue that different operations are often associated with differing forms of co-operation. He has suggested that co-operation in ploughing, which is relatively capital-intensive, may rely less on 'morally-based' relationships than does co-operation in weeding and harvesting which are more labour-intensive operations. The model which he develops is one of a continuum between capital-intensive operations, relying on short-term social

commitments, and labour-intensive activities associated with more complex social relationships between co-operating partners. Turner (1978: 260ff.) has discussed this model and made an attempt to modify it. We shall return to discuss these co-operative arrangements in later chapters. Here I describe only the agricultural techniques available to and practised by the people of Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng.

Ploughing is done almost wholly by cattle draught using a single furrow plough. There were 19 of these ploughs, in a serviceable state, in the two villages for the 1976/7 season when I was first in the field. During that season there was only one tractor available for ploughing in the area, and none of the households of Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng hired it. It was owned by the Roman Catholic mission situated some distance away from Ha Makhaola and was used to plough the mission's own fields as well as being hired to work the fields of villagers living nearer to the mission.

I was told by the villagers that there had been a government tractor available for hire during the previous season (1975/6). The hiring charges asked were said to have been exorbitant and very few farmers had hired it. Letters I received from the village between my two field trips indicated that during the 1977/8 season a government tractor was again available and had been hired by at least eight landholders in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng. Amounts paid were reported to have ranged from R9 for the ploughing of just a part of one field to R54 paid for the complete ploughing of two large fields.

Ploughing by cattle draught in most cases involves a single turning of the soil after seed has been broadcast by hand. Table 4.3 shows that of 92 fields worked during the 1976/7 season,

48 (52,2%) were ploughed once after being thus sown. Only 17 fields (18,5%) were ploughed twice, the seed being broadcast before the second ploughing while a total of 42 fields (45,7%) were planted by mechanical (draught) planter after having been ploughed first. There were seven such planters in the two villages during that season. These planters include a mechanism which can deposit manure or fertilizer with the seed, and some of the crops thus mechanically planted received the benefit of added fertilizers. In the 1977/8 season a few fields were first ploughed, then sown and the soil broken up again later with a harrow. This was, however, quite an unusual procedure.

Table 4.3      Techniques used in ploughing/planting by number of fields held (1976/7 season)

No. of fields held (by households)	5	3	2	1	Totals
Ploughed once and					
-Broadcast planted	4	9	21	14	48
-Mechanically planted	-	13	11	3	27
Ploughed twice and					
-Broadcast planted	-	2	-	-	2
-Mechanically planted	-	6	7	2	15
Total numbers of fields					
Worked	4	30	39	19	92
Not worked	1	9	9	7	25
No data	-	3	2	1	6
TOTALS	5	42	50	27	123

Weeding, too, can theoretically be done mechanically with a cattle-drawn cultivator, but this is possible only on fields which have been mechanically planted and have rows of crop growing

in them. A further manual weeding, by hand-hoe, is necessary after a field has been cultivated mechanically, although this does not require as much effort as weeding a field not mechanically cultivated. There were eleven mechanical cultivators in the two villages during the 1976/7 season, but reportedly only nine fields of the total 92 which were worked (i.e. 9,8%) were cultivated mechanically. This was probably because of an extended period after the beginning of the planting season when very little rain fell so that the soil became quite hard-baked. Another problem was that an infestation of cut-worm destroyed some crops even before the weeding season.

Most weeding, thus, is done by hand-hoes. Like harvesting, which is also done manually, the task of weeding (hoeing) is done primarily by women although men may also be found participating, especially on their own household fields. Some women work alone or with the help of other female members of their households. Others depend also on help from other women in the village, some by calling work-parties and others by employing help which is paid directly in kind. The food which is provided at work-parties (matsema) for weeding is frequently consumed by those who are helping while they are out in the fields, and not back in the homestead where others who have not worked can partake. It can thus be seen as a form of direct payment - albeit in the idiom of reciprocity - for the help rendered. Furthermore, many of those who attended work-parties had neither reason nor means to call for the reciprocal assistance of those on whose fields they had worked. We shall return to these and other co-operative arrangements in later chapters.



## 2. Wage-Labour Employment

At the time of my village census there were 123 adults (41,4% of the adult population) who were absent from the two villages. Most of these absentees, as well as some non-migrants, were wage-earners. This section is concerned primarily with the wage-earners of the community. Those people, especially women, who earned through alternative sources of income are also discussed briefly.

### (a) Men in wage-labour

A total of 100 men (73% of the adult male population) were active wage-labourers. Included among these were miners and other labourers in South Africa as well as locally employed labourers, clerks and teachers in Lesotho. Table 4.4 gives a breakdown by age of the places of work and occupations of all 137 adult men of the two villages in 1976.

Of the 37 men who were not wage-earners 16 were over 55 years of age and felt that they were too old still to be employed as labourers, although there were five men who had continued in wage employment beyond that age. Most of the older men were (or considered themselves to be) practising agriculturalists, as were two of the younger men, one of whom was a newly trained 'progressive' farmer. There were four men who were too ill to participate in either wage-labour or agricultural activities and twelve more who were still at school. Three men were petty traders, one as a tailor/dagga runner in Natal and two in the brewing trade in the local district. A few wage-labourers occasionally left off their employment to attempt to set up as local traders of this kind, but most soon found that this provided insufficient income and returned to wage-labour. This had happened to one of the two local traders who, in 1976/7, were both running local

Table 4.4 Occupational categories of adult male village population, by age: 1976

	16-25 yrs	26-35 yrs	36-45 yrs	46-55 yrs	56-65 yrs	66+ yrs	Totals (wage-labourers in brackets)
<u>South Africa</u>							
Mines	16	18	7	1	1	-	43
Industry & Commerce	4	2	3	3	2	-	14
Construction	4	1	2	-	-	-	7
Railways	-	2	-	2	-	-	4 (58)
Petty trading	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Subtotals	24	23	12	7	3	-	69
<u>Lesotho - away from village</u>							
Herders	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
Clerks/ Technical	3	-	1	1	-	-	5
Teachers	-	2	1	-	-	-	3
Other employed	1	-	1	1	1	-	4 (16)
Scholars	6	-	-	-	-	-	6
Subtotals	14	2	3	2	1	-	22
<u>Lesotho - in village area</u>							
Herders	6	-	3	-	1	-	10
Road labour	1	-	1	2	-	-	4
Other employed	1	1	-	-	-	-	2 (16)
Petty trading	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
Scholars	6	-	-	-	-	-	6
Sick	-	-	2	2	-	-	4
Retired/ Cultivators*	-	-	-	-	10	6	16
Younger Cultivators	1	-	-	1	-	-	2
Subtotals	15	1	8	5	11	6	40
Totals	53	26	23	14	15	6	137 (100)

\*Included among these retired cultivators were the local village bureaucrats - i.e. the chief's principal adviser and her scribe - both of whom received small stipends from central government.

beerhouses. By 1978/9 one of these men had already completed a further contract on a Natal coal mine.

We see from Table 4.4 that the largest single category of male wage-labourers was those employed in mining in South Africa. Of the 100 men comprising the male wage-labour force from the two villages 43 were on the mines, all but two of them on the gold mines. A further 23 men were wage-labourers in other South African sectors, so that, in total, 68% of the male wage-earners of the two villages were employed in South Africa, virtually all of them on an enforced oscillating basis.

Most of the mine labourers (79,1%) were below the age of 35 years, with a sharp decline in numbers of men over the age of 45 years. Those who then continued in wage-labour beyond that age favoured some other type of employment. This was not so easily obtained, however, as was demonstrated by one 51 year old man who was unable to support his household after retiring from a commercial sector job, and was recruited for underground work on a gold mine. By that age, however, most men anticipated that they might be able to begin to depend on remittances returned by the sons in their households, or on bohali (bridewealth) instalments for their daughters.

That younger men were predominantly mine labourers appeared only in part to have been a matter of their choice. The ten youths among the 14 village men who were herders in Lesotho were all below 18 years of age. In terms of the (S.A.) Black Labour Act (No. 67 of 1964) they were thus too young to be recruited for contract labour (see Clarke: 1977b: 10). But most of them could be expected to enlist soon for the first time as mine labourers. This held true too for some of those still at school as well as for those youths who had found other local wage-labour - e.g. as an

assistant in a cafe/beerhouse.

Opportunities of non-mining employment in South Africa were severely limited by the restrictions placed on the employment of foreign Africans in terms of South African legislation (see discussion above). With the recent increases in mine labour wages, moreover, there was a significant move towards mine labour since, as one man put it, "A man who works there (on the mines) can save his money because he does not have to pay for transport and for rent." As yet another informant said:

I no longer wished to work on construction in Natal, so I decided to try the mines. Then I saw that there was money there; I realized that the mines paid much better wages than I had received on construction ... I decided to join the mines because as a construction labourer you are always on the move without a place to stay permanently: Workers are moved around from site to site. Another thing is that one must pay rent as well as for transport to and from work where there are no living quarters near the site. In the mine compound there is permanent accommodation and free transport to work.

#### (b) Mine labour and education

Differences in educational levels appeared to have little influence on young men's decisions to be recruited for mine labour. Even those with some secondary schooling behind them were enlisted for underground labour. It was common cause, during 1976, that many primary school teachers with teaching diplomas had left their teaching posts in Lesotho to take up jobs on the gold mines, because these were better paid and because one could be sure of regular payment. This, it was alleged, did not always happen to teachers in the rural schools in Lesotho. Two young men of Ha Makhaola who were both under 20 years of age wrote matriculation examinations at the end of 1976 and then enlisted for mine labour during 1977. They were employed in administrative surface work, and with their earnings they hoped to be able to provide for their

university education. This was a fairly common pattern, even at lower grades, and a young man with a J.C. who had just returned from his first spell on the mines remarked: "After working (on the mines) a man can be able to use the money he earned to go back to school." Another case was that of a 53 year old man who had done just that many years before, and had finally matriculated.

There appeared to be no significant correspondence, below the higher levels of education, between educational levels and whether a young man spent his working years in any specific occupation. Thus young men with up to ten years of schooling were found to have been recruited for underground mine labour, along with those few who were illiterate. Table 4.5, which gives an age breakdown of the educational levels of the mine labourers from the two villages, shows that the majority of mine workers were relatively well-educated, younger men.

Table 4.5      Educational levels of mine labourers, by age categories

Years of schooling	<u>Age categories</u>					totals
	16-20 yrs	21-25 yrs	26-30 yrs	31-35 yrs	over 36 yrs	
Nil	-	1	1	-	1	3
1-4	2	1	2	1	6	12
5-7	2	4	5	2	1	14
8-10	1	5	2	5	1	14
Totals	5	11	10	8	9	43

Villagers recognised that jobs outside of mining were difficult to find and that particularly primary education did not open any doors to wage-labour in other sectors. Education up to the Junior Certificate (J.C.) was similarly recognised by most not to prepare one for a job other than in mining. The knowledge

that local wage-labour was scarce and relatively badly paid - men with the local road gang in 1976/7 claimed to earn only R40 per month - made mine labour an acceptable form of employment, especially since the recent wage increases. Differences in education were expected to be reflected not in whether one was a mine worker but rather in the kind of job one held on a mine. Migrants were asked a series of questions about the desirability of mine labour employment for those with differing levels of education. Their responses revealed that, in general, education up to the J.C. level was not considered to preclude one from underground work. It was accepted, however, that J.C. holders were likely to find better paid and less arduous underground tasks. Two respondents' comments reflect the general opinion:

Those people who have been far at school can still work on the mines; and they can work underground too - just like the Whites do.

A man who has a J.C. can try to find a job on the surface, but if he finds that he earns very little there, he is quite right to go and work underground.

Those interviewed expected matriculants not to accept blindly the necessity of mining work, however. It was hoped that they would not enlist for mine labour unless they had been unable to find positions in Lesotho. A similar attitude was held about men with primary teaching diplomas and who ought to have been able to find teaching posts in Lesotho. But, for both matriculants and teaching diplomates, a higher wage was sufficient reason for accepting mine employment, although underground work was regarded as unsuitable:

Yes it is all right for educated people to go to the mines, even teachers, because they are attracted there by the money... but they should work on the surface. If he has that certificate they will make him a clerk.

Those with teaching diplomas can find teaching work even there on the mines, for there are schools on the mines, so

they can surely teach there; and if they wish not to (teach) they can still be labourers. They are the fortunate ones because they can choose.

Thus, although the range of areas in which Basotho could find wage-labour employment in South Africa was fairly limited - with the mines being the most easily accessible - there was some concern for the different types of work available within the mining industry itself. Most men expected to spend many years of their lives on the South African mines and the levels of education each had reached was expected to correspond - to some degree - with the type of work a man would do. This was markedly so for those who had completed ten or more years of schooling.

#### (c) Men's motivations for migration

There is a normative ideal that the responsibility of a husband is to provide the material resources necessary for the upkeep of his household. One might even go so far as to suggest that this is his basic commitment in the conjugal relationship. The primary concern of all those who migrate is the amount they will earn during their absence, for it is from these earnings that they must remit their households' necessary upkeep. Furthermore, as Murray (1976b) has pointed out, a man needs these earnings to provide bridewealth (bohali) in order to fulfil the jural commitment of marriage and to be able to claim legitimate paternity over his wife's children. Wage earnings are thus necessary for 'keeping house' in this sense also; i.e. for continuing the lineage (Murray: 1976a: 2).

Most men I asked regarded the wages they would earn as the most important criterion for selection of a job - if a choice were ever available. However some did put wages second to security benefits like pension schemes and guarantees of compensation

payments in cases of industrial accidents. The fear of such accidents - and especially underground collapses and explosions - was the negative factor most often considered with regard to mine labour (cf. McAllister: 1976: 91: Table 32).

While men did say that they would prefer to work close to home, all understood that, even if this were possible, it would mean having to accept substantially lower wages than those they earned on the mines and elsewhere in South Africa. Only one of the eleven men interviewed on this topic was prepared to accept local wages, and he was limited by a physical disability to a similarly low wage as a surface labourer on the mines. All those men interviewed who were earning a basic monthly wage in the region of R150 or more in South Africa said that they would not consider taking up employment locally for less than R100 per month. Those earning rather less (about R90 per month), however, were prepared to accept only a proportionately smaller reduction to about R75 per month. These statements were purely hypothetical, for - as most men realized, and pointed out - there were very few jobs available at any wage at all in the neighbourhood of their home villages. Nevertheless, their responses indicate that they would have been happy to work for less if they could have lived at home, although they would then have had to struggle harder to make ends meet.

(d) Woman earners

(i) Women in wage-labour: While men are expected to earn the household's keep, the role of a married woman is to manage the rural household on the remittances she receives from her labour migrant husband (cf. Murray: 1976a). Only if a woman's husband fails to provide an income for the household, or if



she has been widowed or deserted, may she legitimately attempt to earn an income, especially if this is obviously a wage income (cf. Mayer: 1978: 127ff.).

Local opportunities for wage-labour include employment in domestic service in the villages and as beerhouse or cafe helps. Women employed thus are inevitably those who have been deserted or widowed or are unmarried mothers. Others in the same predicament may have to go beyond the village to other parts of the district and country to find such work either in cafes and beerhouses in other villages or as cleaners in government buildings, stores, etc. A few village women with the necessary qualifications are teachers and nurses in Lesotho. These are occupations which may acceptably be performed by married women, although some husbands prefer their wives not to be thus employed if this means they will have to live away from their village home. There are also a few women who go into South Africa either to find wage-labour employment or to participate there in petty trading. Most of these women are in South Africa clandestinely. They take the incumbent risks because they have no other source of income and they cannot rely on remittances sent home by a wage-earning husband.

In total there were 27 women (16,9% of the total adult female population) of Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng who were wage-earners. Table 4.6 gives a breakdown of the occupations of these 27 women and shows also their marital status.

Table 4.6 shows that 19 of the 27 wage-earning women did not have husbands to support them. Four of the eight married wage-earning women lived with their respective husbands - the two teachers in fact worked with their husbands who were also teachers. Neither of the two nurses was, however, able to live with her husband at his place of work. We see thus that, by and

Table 4.6 Occupational categories of female wage-labourers,  
by marital status

	Married	Widowed	Deserted	Never Married*	Totals
<u>South Africa</u>					
Domestic	1	4	1	1	7
Farm labour	1	1	-	-	2
Factory labour	-	-	1	-	1
Subtotals	2	5	2	1	10
<u>Lesotho - away from village</u>					
Teachers	2	1	-	-	3
Nurses	2	-	-	-	2
Cafe/Bar asst.	1	-	1	2	4
Institutional cleaners/cooks	1	1	-	1	3
Domestics	-	-	1	-	1
Subtotals	6	2	2	3	13
<u>Lesotho - in village area</u>					
Cafe/Bar asst.	-	1	1	-	2
Domestic (plus Brewing)	-	-	1	-	1
Homestead care- takers (owners in S. Africa)	-	1	-	-	1
Subtotals	-	2	2	-	4
TOTALS	8	9	6	4	27

\* Three of these four women who were never married had dependent children whom they supported with their wage-earnings.

large, the women who had entered wage-labour were forced to earn their keep for themselves because they had no source of remittances but did have dependents to support. This was true too of many of the women who were involved in petty trading, especially those who migrated to South Africa.

(ii) Women with non-wage income: Unlike male migrants who do not have the same domestic commitments, the women who crossed the border in search of an income attempted first to remain in the village for as long as possible, trying there to eke out an existence by selling home-brewed beer and prostitution. Only if this provided insufficient income did they decide to proceed to clandestine petty trading in the Black townships of one or other South African town. With the restrictions placed on these women by South African legislation such petty trading is 'safer' and more convenient than wage-labour positions, for they are less likely to be apprehended and to lose significant amounts of their earnings in fines. Nevertheless, a few village women did work as domestics and in other formal employment in South Africa. Most of them did so illegally although a very few had somehow gained the necessary permission.

In the village itself most women participated in petty trading in one or another form. Local sources of non-wage cash income for a woman are through the sale of home-brewed beer or imported liquor, through participation in savings-clubs and the associated litokofele (see Chapter VIII), and through the sale of vegetables or fruit in season or of handicrafts. A number of women also receive gifts from their lovers (linyatsi; sing. = nyatsi = paramour) and these may form an important supplement to their income.

These activities were not limited to relicts alone. Most married women attempted to augment the remittances they received by participating, to a lesser or greater extent, in petty trading. For those whose husbands were irregular remitters or poor earners, such added income was often essential for the household's upkeep. Those who could rely on regular support saw petty trading as an opportunity to invest some of their money profitably. Furthermore, as bonyatsi (the practice of extra-marital relations) is very widespread, each wife implicitly regards the gifts she receives from her lovers as her due. This is because she can expect that when her own husband returns from work with a large portion of his earnings he will distribute his favours quite widely. Thus other women will benefit from his earnings in the same way as she has benefited from the earnings of other men. For married women whose husbands provide regular support these gifts are not essential, however. It is the wives of absconders and the widows of the community who must depend heavily on these local sources of income. And it is they who must consider the alternative of jumping the border and going into South Africa to earn a living when their local income proves to be inadequate.

### 3. Wages Earned and Remittances Reaching the Village Households

We have seen that the remittances sent home by absent wage earners and the money with which they return home are of vital importance for the survival of the rural community, and thus - by extension - for the reproduction of the migrant labour force. Van der Wiel has shown that direct migrant labour earnings provided the largest contribution to most households' incomes, particularly in households in higher income brackets and with at least one migratory wage-labouring member. On average, he says,

migrant labour earnings comprised 70% of households' total incomes in 1976 (van der Wiel: 1977: 87; cf. p. 88: Table 48).

It has been estimated that in 1965/6 less than one fifth of the earnings of Basotho in South Africa were being remitted home (Wilson: 1972: 110). A later estimate (McDowall: 1976: 95) suggests that two-thirds of miners' basic earnings were reaching Lesotho in 1972, while van der Wiel (1977: 79) has calculated that in 1974/5 mine labour migrants from Lesotho were repatriating an average of nearly three-quarters of their basic earnings.

The implication, that there was an increase between 1972 and 1974/5 in the proportion of miners' basic earnings reaching Lesotho, is not wholly accurate since the figures McDowall and van der Wiel use are not really comparable. Figures derived from a survey of miners on the mines during 1972/3 show that they were each repatriating an average of approximately R160 per annum (McDowall: 1976: 95). This amounts to 66,9% of the officially estimated average basic wage, of R239 per annum, for Black miners in 1972 (McDowall: 1976: 94: Table; also van der Wiel: 1977: 69: Table 28). Van der Wiel's calculation, on the other hand, derives wholly from his survey of miners who had been at work between July 1974 and December 1975. On average these men were at work for 11,2 months (1 month = 26 shifts) earning an average basic wage of R2.88 per shift; i.e. on average they earned R839 per spell at work. Of this money they repatriated R607 (72,3%)(van der Wiel: 1977: 78-9: Table 39). If, following McDowall (1976), we adjust the amounts repatriated to account for a 12 month period these will amount to R650 per miner. Van der Wiel (1977: 69: Table 28) has tabulated the average annual wages for a number of years including 1975 when the figure was R967. Taken as a proportion of this figure the average of R650 repatriated amounts to 67,2%

which is not significantly different from McDowall's (1976) figure for 1972.

Comparative data for labour migrants from Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng allow for only tentative general statements, primarily because they show wide variations between individuals. These data were obtained from interview schedules, from records in a local recruiting office and from certain mine records. I was able to obtain some information from the Qacha's Nek office of the Mine Labour Organisation (or, as it is now known, TEBA: The Employment Bureau of Africa). These data relate particularly to the recruitment histories of selected miners from the two villages. But the system of recording payments of remittances rendered these virtually impossible to trace on an individual basis. On aggregate, the office paid out R918 206.58 in deferred and remitted pay against 5 619 separate vouchers in 1976; i.e. the average amount paid out was R163.41 per voucher. This figure is not, however, an indication of sizes of remittances as these vouchers are used for both remittances and deferred pay payments. The figure is thus skewed by the normally much larger amounts which men collect themselves on their return home. Information provided by a number of gold mines was from their own records on individual miners from the two villages. It was primarily to do with wages earned and had virtually no information about remittances.

The data from the mines shows that during 1975 and 1976 the basic per shift wages earned by miners from Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng ranged from R1.18 for surface work to R6.60 paid to an underground team leader. These two amounts were paid to different individuals from the two villages in April and June 1976 respectively. The data indicate furthermore how the pay packets of many miners fluctuate from month to month. A random example will

demonstrate this: A surface worker employed from 23 March to 26 December 1976 received pay packages ranging from R20.67 to R62.12 after every 28 calendar days. These did not increase steadily over time but were erratic. Basic pay levels may also fluctuate. The records show that if a man went 'absent without permission' (A.W.O.P.) or otherwise broke mine regulations some of his pay was docked and he might also find that his rate of pay had been decreased. Another problem is that, on some mines, a returning miner may have to spend some time in the labour 'pool' at a lower level of pay than he had received on his previous discharge. A few miners I interviewed argued that this was the reason they preferred not to be recruited to work on certain mines, because they might have to 'waste time' waiting to be posted to their gangs. During that time, they said, they would earn less than they were used to.

Among a number of labour migrants whom I interviewed there were ten mine labourers from whom I managed to obtain some consistent information about their earnings and the amounts they had repatriated - as remittances and in cash and kind brought home - during 1975 and 1976. Their periods of service, which averaged 13,3 months, ranged in length from six to twenty-two months, and their earnings ranged from R45 (surface worker) to R220 per month. While one young man claimed to have repatriated sums totalling virtually all of his earnings, another said that he had repatriated amounts worth only 14% of his earnings. On average, the amounts claimed to have been repatriated were of the order of 50% of the respondents' stated total earnings over the whole period of their service.<sup>25</sup> The actual amounts said to have been repatriated ranged from R3 400 over a twenty month period of service to R190 over a six month period.

I have limited the data I have presented to those about miners only because these give a fair indication of the range of amounts recorded as having been earned as well as sent and brought back home by Basotho in wage-labour in South Africa. A similar range in sizes of remittances was reported to be coming home from men employed in other industries in that country.

The data on remittances which I obtained from respondents to my interview schedules often differed from one interview to the next. There were few people whose responses to later detailed scheduled interviews tallied with those they had given to earlier probes during my village census; and in those few cases where I was able to trace remittances in the local TEBA records, differences were often revealed again. This can be attributed to at least two factors. Firstly, people are reluctant to disclose the exact amounts they have remitted or received, even to their own close neighbours and kin, for there are always people who might be able to lay claim to at least a part of whatever money does reach home. It is of interest to note here that most husbands will not allow their wives to know exactly what their earnings amount to. Secondly, men are away for extended periods and there are few people who keep an account of exactly what they send, receive or spend. A notable exception was a middle-aged man who showed me postal and telegraphic money order counterfoils for R2 120 remitted during his previous absence at work. But even he claimed to have received a different amount of deferred pay from the figure I found in the TEBA records.

For many women it is more important that they have a certain amount of money available regularly than that a specific amount is remitted regularly. A lump sum may well be made to last for a number of months until the next remittance arrives.



Alternatively a loan will be obtained and then repaid on receipt of the next remittance. In some cases such a loan may be for a special purpose at home for which an extra sum is suddenly needed. In such a contingency a special letter requesting an extra remittance will be written to an absent wage-earner. There are also those women to whom remittances come so infrequently and irregularly that they must augment these with some form of local earning. These are the women who often rely heavily on beer sales and related petty trading to see them through from one remittance to the next.

None of my respondents was able to demonstrate that remittances of a specified amount were reaching home regularly. Many claimed that they received (or sent) 'about R30 every two months' - the amounts specified ranged from R10 up to over R100, and the time period from one to four or even more months, not necessarily respectively. But further questioning revealed that remittances were quite erratic and that there were often long gaps between them. Even the man who kept a close account of all the money he sent home had not remitted it regularly although his wife said that he remitted 'R120 every two or three months'. His remittance pattern was as follows:

Following his re-engagement on the mines in April 1975 he had sent money home as follows: August 1975 - R40; October 1975 - R80; January 1976 - R60; March 1976 - R500; June 1976 - R680; November 1976 - R760. He then returned home in November 1976 and drew a further R999 in deferred pay from the TEBA office.

Two more examples of variations in the amounts said to have been repatriated will demonstrate further variability of remittances and the discrepancies between responses to different interview questions.

Case 4.1 Michael, a surface worker on the mines, was engaged in November 1975 and discharged in November 1976.

From mine records, his gross pay for this whole period of service totalled R633.09. His gross wage for each of the last five months of his time at work was: July 1976 - R49.22; August 1976 - R51.62; September 1976 - R48.99; October 1976 - R51.85; November 1976 - R74.90. His remittances, according to mine records, were February 1976 - R42; April 1976 - R44; August 1976 - R67. But during various interviews his remittances were said to amount to (i) 'R40 to R80 every two or three months'; (ii) R16 in December 1975 and then R20 every month from January through August 1976; (iii) December 1975 - R16; March 1976 - R40; May 1976 - R40; August 1976 - R40. The only figure for which there was never any discrepancy was that of the amount he had with him on his return home: R60 in deferred pay and R40 in cash.

Case 4.2 Neo, who is an underground mine labourer, was engaged in October 1974 and discharged in August 1976. His basic pay rate rose during that period from R1.24 to R3.70 per shift. At one interview he said that he sent home 'between R15 and R40 monthly', this amount being shared out between his wife and his mother. Alternatively he sent to one or the other of them in alternate months. His mother complained, however, that he hardly gave her any money at all and then only in small amounts when he came home. In a later interview Neo claimed to have remitted 'R30 to R40 every three months' and to have brought home R210 in deferred pay and kind worth R50. His wife said, independently, that he had brought home R490 in cash. TEBA records include the following remittances sent by Neo, the last directed explicitly to his mother: January 1975 - R30; March 1975 - R40; July 1975 - R44; September 1975 - R30; December 1975 - R60; March 1976 - R40, and again R40; April 1976 - R30; July 1976 - R240. I could not find a record of a deferred pay payment. (cf. Case 3.2).

With the vast differences in the wages earned by different individuals we can expect that the amounts they remit will vary accordingly. The irregularity of remittances can be attributed to factors such as the pressures of perceived priority need at work and, more important, the wish to accumulate as great an amount as possible in order to use it on more than just sustenance for members of the household at home.

Most men hope that their earnings will be used primarily for building their homesteads rather than just for keeping them. Such a hope is, however, largely in vain for subsistence requirements draw very heavily on remitted monies. But some amounts are set aside for bohali payments, house-building and the purchase of livestock.

Homestead building is an activity which continues, in one or other form throughout a household's domestic development, especially in the years during which wage-earnings from one or more household members are available. Most households without land, for example, utilize their wage-earnings to gain access to one or more fields, as well as to build houses on the homestead site. Building a homestead thus involves more than just the construction of houses. It includes the purchase of livestock to create a herd, of implements and of a variety of other household and personal goods. It involves also the consolidation of the household's rights to local resources, especially arable land, and this comes in part with its increasing utilization of these resources. By building up a herd which grazes on the community's commonage, a household establishes its right to both pasturage and to fuller membership of the community as a holder of arable land. Homestead building includes also what McAllister (1979: 36-7) has called 'social building', the establishment and consolidation of social relations of local co-operation with other households.<sup>26</sup> And it includes - at least in the earlier developmental phases - the development of wage-earning abilities for earnings form the resource which underpins all other aspects of the homestead building process.

Certain aspects of this process are emphasized during the different phases of domestic development, and the material conditions of most households reflect the extent of their domestic development and their success in homestead building. Early on, the homestead must be established by the construction of houses, the establishment of a herd and the creation of local co-operative relationships. These in turn will reinforce the household's claim to access to local natural resources, the most valued being

arable land. Later on these rights must be consolidated and the household's access to local resources assured. This may mean the cementing of co-operative relationships with other households, thus ensuring social credit in the community for later security. And even in the declining phases of the household's development, when it has shed its younger generation, further consolidation of co-operative relations is necessary. This is most important where the household members can no longer provide a source of cash income for themselves through wage-labour, for they must rely on others for assistance.

Most villagers understand quite clearly the need to build up their resources over time. Men talk of their first ever having gone to work in order to earn money for food in their natal homes and also, as one man put it, "Because I wanted a wife who would give me children ... The children I want so that when I get old and can no longer work they will be there to assist me."

The chapters which follow examine the differences in the material wealth of the households in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng, and which are apparent in most Lesotho communities. At the same time they demonstrate the various ways in which wage-earnings are spent at home in the process of homestead building. With the on-going process of domestic development, households' material resource bases change and their members adopt changing strategies in both building these up and utilizing them.

## NOTES TO PART A

### Chapter II

1. South Africa granted 'independence' to the Transkei in 1976. This has resulted in an on-going dispute over alleged border closures between south eastern Lesotho and Transkeian territory. Thus far only South Africa and her other 'independent' Bantustans, Bophuthatswana and Venda, have recognized Transkeian independence.
2. I have followed here the Lesotho Bureau of Statistics' distinction between de facto and de jure population; viz. "de jure ... should be understood to mean those persons who were present in the country, and who were enumerated on a de facto basis, together with those persons who (had been) ... away from the country for less than five years and were enumerated in absentia at their usual places of residence" (Lesotho: 1969: 85). In discussing the population of Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng I use other criteria for registering absentee migrants as de jure residents; cf. Murray (1976a: 57) and van der Wiel (1977: 16).
3. A tenth district, with its administrative centre at Thaba Tseka in the middle of the mountain zone, is presently being established and its territory demarcated in excised portions of existing districts.
4. From the time the country came under British rule in 1870 until its political independence in 1966, it was known as Basutoland.
5. Difficulty has been encountered in various places when using Bureau of Statistics' figures as sometimes very large discrepancies occur between statistics in their various publications. Thus Lesotho 1976a (p. 7: Table 4), remarking in a note that its coverage is incomplete (i.e. that the figures presented may be too small), gives imports of maize and maize products for 1974 and 1975 respectively as 298 799 and 138 872 (90 kg.) units. Lesotho 1976c (p. 8: Table 6) appears to overcompensate on the 1975 figures while virtually eliminating the 1974 figure. It thus presents the respective 1974 and 1975 imports of maize and maize products as 24 900 units and 656 148 units. Another example is the variation in tabulations of arable land area by zone: See Lesotho: 1973: 92: Table 11.6; 1972: 65: Table 2.0122; 1974: 21: Table 33.
6. cf. Beinart (1978) who has emphasized the importance of cattle purchases for Pondo migrants in the earlier parts of the 20th century.
7. In order to distinguish between South African and Lesotho legislation and regulations I have prefaced the titles of Acts etc. by (S.A.) and (L.S.) respectively.
8. "A prescribed area is one which has been declared prescribed in the Government Gazette; in practice it is any area which is considered to be a "White" area, but where a large number of Africans live and work" (Memorandum: 1974: 1).

9. For a further discussion of the legal position of labour migrants in South Africa see Memorandum (1974); Wilson (1972: 221-31); Horrell (1963 and 1971); Owen (1964); Murray (1976a: 41-3); Peskin and Spiegel (1976: 14-18); and van der Wiel (1977: 14-5).
10. Perry (1977) has devoted a large section of his thesis to an examination of the manner in which central government and party politics came to play a very important part in allocations of land through the election processes to the Land Advisory Boards just before the abortive general election early in 1970. (Since the 1973 (L.S.) Land Act, these boards have been known as development committees.) Perry has also shown how the authority of the chieftaincy has been undermined by the introduction of centralized administrative procedures to deal with land allocations.
11. Murray (1976a: 145ff.) has convincingly rejected the use of the nuclear family as a unit of analysis, in part because the incidence of these structures and other forms of domestic association is a function of the developmental cycle in the context of a system of oscillating labour migration. Thus the bare fact that a high proportion of elementary families is landless, as stated by Williams and which I cite here, is meaningless without discussion of the developmental phase reached by those elementary families. Furthermore, as Murray (op. cit.: 149) has said: "There is no functional significance in distinguishing separate titles to land within a household ... The significant index of land shortage is availability of land per household or per unit of population ..." (Murray's emphasis).
12. Perry (1977) has emphasized the party political composition of the predecessors to the development committees, i.e. the land advisory boards, implying also that allocations had an element of party-political favouritism in them. Although the development committee of Ha Makhaola was dominated by supporters of the Basutoland National Party (the governing party) I heard no complaints of favouritism on a party-political basis.

### Chapter III

13. The Basotho in the Matatiele district before the Gun War had reportedly migrated there from the Lesotho lowlands just before and during the occupation of the area by Adam Kok's Griqua people, c. 1859-61. (Papers held by Prof. W.D. Hammond Tooke) Those who crossed the border into Lesotho during the Gun War were those who had opposed the Colonial disarmament ruling and had had to flee into the mountains (Germond: 1967: 429).
14. These problems were not only of the bureaucratic kind. Between October 1976 and April 1977 the road linking Matatiele and the Qacha's Nek border post, and running through the Transkeian Maluti district, deteriorated badly through lack of upkeep. This may well have been a deliberate response to Lesotho's persistent claims that the border post had been unilaterally closed, implying that the road was no longer in use.
15. Murray (1976a: 57) has been rather stricter than the Bureau of Statistics (Lesotho: 1969: 85; cf. Chapter II note 2 above) in his

definition of temporary absentees. He has included only two categories: (a) Those who had spent some time, albeit brief, in their homes in his village of research during the 28 months over which his fieldwork was conducted; (b) Those for whom he had "convincing evidence that the absentee made some contribution to the income of the household during that time" without having actually visited the village during those 28 months (Murray: 1976a: 57). My own rather shorter periods of fieldwork did not allow me to be quite so strict and I have had to accept the word of informants as regards the likelihood that absentees would return. In dubious cases I have attempted to cross check with other informants and, where possible, with recruiting office records. I have, furthermore, followed van der Wiel (1977: 16) in defining oscillating labour migrants as those "who worked in the Republic of South Africa at least one month of the 12 months prior to the date of enumeration." This includes those who were at home at the time of enumeration.

16. For a discussion of the historical development, the jurisdiction and the role of the Local and Central Courts, see Poulter (1976: 37ff.) and Perry (1977: 317ff.).
17. The ineffectiveness of this form of communication has been discussed by Wallman (1969: 18-21) and by Perry (1977: 194ff.).
18. cf. Perry (1977: 6-7) who makes a similar point, phrasing it in terms of a breakdown in the intensity of village relationships: e.g. "a lessening of bonds, a change in expected norms of neighbourly conduct and ... the attenuation of tribal cohesiveness" (ibid.: 446: n. 4).
19. All references to population in the next two sections refer to the de jure population unless otherwise specified. Thus household sizes etc. cited all refer to the de jure figures.
20. For example Murray (1976a: 59-61) shows that in a sample population of 764 individuals resident in three ecological zones there were 134 (18,2%) who were absent at any one time in 1974. His more in-depth study of one lowlands village produced a figure of 18,6%. My own earlier research in a western lowlands village (1973/4) produced a comparable figure of 20,7% (Spiegel: 1975a: 440).
21. Van der Wiel gives a survey figure of 56% for the rate of migration of adult males (18-60 years). His figure includes only migrants to South Africa, however.
22. Sheddick's (1954) exclusion of their labour power in his definition rests, in part, on his failure to acknowledge the importance of wage-earned contributions to the maintenance of the household's members. It derives also from his non-recognition of labour as a material resource.
23. I use co-operation here in its widest sense to mean reciprocal assistance, hired help and other relations of assistance.
24. Murray (1976a) has drawn heavily on Adams' (1971) work which questioned the universality of the nuclear family as the smallest socially functional unit in human social organisation. Using

Adams' paradigm of the nuclear family, as comprising just (and all of) conjugal, maternal and paternal dyads, Murray has criticised southern African ethnographers' preoccupation with the nuclear family. He has argued that the functional social unit is the household, while the development of that unit must be analyzed "by examining variations in the manner of articulation of the maternal dyad into the household" (Murray: 1976a: 151).

#### Chapter IV

25. This average percentage would have been higher if it were stated as a proportion of basic rather than total earnings. But respondents did not all differentiate between basic and total earnings, the latter understandably being of more significance to them. As proportions of basic earnings (where these were available) these figures compare favourably with those cited earlier.
26. I am concerned here with the creation and consolidation of the homestead with respect to other homesteads and I concentrate on relations between households. I am thus not considering the internal building up of the homestead, i.e. the creation and consolidation of workable interpersonal relations within the household as, for example, between husband and wife. Further research would be required for a study of this equally important aspect of the homestead building process.



## P A R T    B

### V    LANDLESS WAGE-DEPENDENT HOUSEHOLDS

We now turn to the five chapters which form the body of this dissertation. Each of these looks at a different category of households in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng. I begin, in this chapter, with those households which hold no land and are supported by remittances sent home by a wage-earning member.

We have seen earlier (Table 4.1) that sixteen of the households in the community were landless. Eleven of these were directly dependent on wages earned by one or more of their members and they are my concern here. Six of them were headed by young recently married men and were households in an early phase of domestic development. I discuss these in the first section. In the second section I turn to three households which were headed by somewhat older men all of whom were absconders who have recently returned to the community to set up rural homesteads. The chapter ends with a brief look at two woman-headed households which were particularly insecure and disadvantaged and whose female heads had turned to wage-labour in desperation. Each of the latter two categories has fallen by the wayside of the 'modal' developmental cycle.

#### 1.    Building a Homestead I - Young Households Setting up House

All but one of the six early phase landless households comprised an elementary family one or two generations deep. Two of the young couples had not yet had any children. The one exception was a household in which the head's old mother was also resident,<sup>1</sup> while another household included the young (classificatory) sister

of the wife's mother. None of these families had more than two very young children. The mean age of the household heads was 30,0 years (range: 26-34), and that of their wives was 20,7 years (range: 19-22).

Each of the household heads was a wage-labourer on a South African gold mine, although some had previously been employed in other industries e.g. railway construction. Their wages provided the main source of support for each of their respective households. One household also received irregular remittances from the head's mother's ex-employer for whom she had been a domestic. She had now retired but had previously spent some 35 years employed in Natal. These households are thus wholly dependent on remittances - at least for the moment.

Despite their present landlessness each of these households can expect that, in the future, they will hold fields which might provide a supplement to wage-earnings. At the very least, it is hoped, a field's harvest might reduce the regularity of the need for remittances while the harvest tides the household over for a month or two. As one young man, physically deformed and restricted to lower paid surface work on a mine, said: "If I had a field and were to plough it, and if the harvest was good, I'd not have to send money home so regularly."

Most young households soon begin to build herds of livestock which - even if small - require the investment of a proportion of the household's wage-earnings. Most households begin by purchasing small stock and concern themselves with the purchase of cattle only when they have fields for which they need draught animals.<sup>2</sup> But by starting to build a herd, even of small stock, these younger households are already indicating their claims to local resources through their use of communal pasturage. Moreover,

if the household lacks the necessary labour for herding their animals - as most of these young households do - it must turn to other households for assistance. This requires the establishment of certain social relations of co-operation in order that the animals may be cared for. In some cases the household can depend on kin or neighbours to provide this service in an informal manner. This nevertheless requires the recurrent payment of gifts of cash and kind derived from remittances. Alternatively a household will put its livestock out as mafisa - livestock in the care of another who benefits from their produce. Thus the investment of wages in livestock provides a small resource for those who care for them, for the milk and fleece of animals thus put out have customarily been regarded as the right of the livestock caretaker.<sup>3</sup>

A large proportion of these households' remittances is spent on consumer items (primarily foodstuffs) purchased in the nearby cafes and stores. But some of their income is diffused through the community along a variety of routes. Diffusing earnings in this way is not limited to households in this category, although certain avenues are more important for them than are others.

One route of diffusion is through the transfer of bride-wealth (bohali) which, according to van der Wiel (1977: 80: Table 40), accounts for an average of 8% of the money repatriated by mine labourers. Murray (1976a and b; 1977) has very ably discussed the importance of bridewealth transfers in diffusing remittances. This is a particularly important route, especially during this early phase, as bridewealth payments legitimate not only a man's marriage but also his paternity. His right to claim support - in his old age - from his children thus depends on his

having paid adequate bridewealth for filiation to be recognized.

An important activity through which further amounts are diffused is house-building. Building a house is as important for a young household as paying bridewealth is for a young husband. By acquiring a homestead site and building a house on it a young household demonstrates its membership of the village community and thereby accepts the norms of behaviour in that community.<sup>4</sup> As such, having built a house is an important although implicit prerequisite before one can be considered eligible to be allocated a field (cf Sheddick: 1954: 68).

Considerable labour is necessary for the construction of a sandstone house such as one finds in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng. It includes quarrying and transporting large chunks of stone, collecting thatch and roofing timbers and levelling the house site, all of which can be done by work-parties (matsema; sing. = letsema). Masonry, carpentry and thatching, on the other hand, are skills normally performed by local specialists (men) in exchange for a piece-work cash wage. Final plastering is the duty of the woman (or women) of the household, but a wife may call a work-party for assistance with this task.

Remittances are thus diffused through the process of house-building. In order to gain full stature in the community a young wage earner must build a house and this requires the expenditure locally of some of his earnings. But not only the specialist builders benefit. Work-parties also provide an avenue for the diffusion of remittances despite their so-called reciprocal nature (cf. Sheddick: 1954: 86; Ashton: 1952: 131). The calling of such work-parties is phrased in the idiom of reciprocity insofar as one might expect to be called in return by a few of those who have attended one's own work-party. But many regular

participants at work-parties do not have the resources to call work-parties of their own, and a few rely on work-parties to provide them with an occasional source of sustenance. Moreover, the households which do call work-parties often do so soon after either receiving a remittance or having a wage-earner return home for a visit. This is especially notable for work-parties called for house construction which is not constrained by season as are agricultural tasks.

We thus see here the retention or persistence of an earlier form of co-operation which has been transformed in content. Whereas work-parties retain an idiom of reciprocity they have effectively become a disguised form of wage-labour. As such they provide an avenue for some remitted wages to trickle through into the rural community<sup>5</sup> (cf. Cliffe: 1977: 199; 1978: 334).

Another avenue for the diffusion of remittances is through gifts of cash or kind to the chief or to members of the local development committee. These are not obligatory in the sense that the payment of tribute to the chieftaincy can be legally enforced, but it is essential if one's household is to be granted a field. Recurrent small gifts from a young wage-earner's household to the chief or members of the development committee are thus important for the allocation of both homestead sites and fields, and they are thus vital in the process of homestead-building. Larger amounts, allegedly reaching up to R100, may pass hands at the time a field is allocated. These gifts are known as tjotjo. I discuss this further in Chapter IX.

In villages, like Ha Makhaola, which lie alongside main roads and are area chieftaincy's administrative centres the payment of tjotjo (bribes) for land allocations has become

increasingly important. Ha Makhaola has seen an influx of immigrant households from outlying villages in recent years and some of the younger men in the community were concerned that this was exacerbating land shortages. One young husband complained that he had had difficulty even in obtaining an allocation for a homestead site because of the recent immigrants' willingness to pay relatively large amounts to the village authorities. He also complained about allocations of fields to immigrants' households ahead of claims made by households of locally born residents:

Well, let us consider the cases of those people who were born here and those who have removed and settled here: some people who were born here and who pay tax here have no fields, while those immigrants do have fields ... This then is a bad thing because they have passed a bribe (tjotjo) ...

It may well be that the presence of immigrants has inflated the level of tjotjo payments. But, despite my respondent's opinion, the principle of passing bribes cannot be attributed to their presence alone.

Besides tjotjo there are other gifts in the community which are drawn off the earnings of a wage-labourer and are thus diffused beyond his own household. Some of these go clandestinely to a man's nyatsi (concubine; paramour). It would seem that almost all adults participate in such bonyatsi relationships with small gifts passing from man to woman (see Chapter VIII). Other gifts go to kinsmen, neighbours and other close associates in the community. They are not part of explicit material transactions. But, as we have seen, the building up of social relations in the village is an essential part of building the homestead, and these gifts serve to cement such ties. These prestations may also be part of a long term strategy aimed at effecting the

re-allocation of a parent's fields to a young wage-earner's household. Thus, for example, Neo, a mine worker and the head of a newly established landless household, took pains to make clear that he sent some of his remittances directly to his widowed mother so that, as he hoped, she would re-allocate one of her two fields to his young household (see Case 5.2 below).

Let us look briefly at the cash gifts which another young miner, Masopha, said he had given to various people in the community when he returned home for a 30-day period of leave in December 1978.

- To his FBS, a teacher, (son of the chieftainess' principal adviser): R20 "as a donation to the moketi (feast) which he has just held."
- To a wealthy neighbour, a dagga runner, (no ascertainable kin link): R10 "as a donation to the moketi (feast) which he held while I was away at the mines."
- To his own widowed mother: R20. "I give her money whenever I come home because it was she who cared for me when I was young. I also send her money while I am at work. When I send to my wife I send also to my mother to help my younger brothers who are still in the house (dependents)."
- To his older brother, a locally employed labourer: R20. "He always helps me, especially when I am away when he helps my children and my wife. He said that he wished to buy a radio, so I gave him money towards that."
- To his FZ, a very old widow: 50c. "I wanted to give her some paraffin and snuff."
- To his MM, a widow: R1 "for maize meal."
- To the principal adviser to the chieftainess (his FB): R5 "because I know he likes tea and sugar."
- To an ex neighbour now running her deceased husband's cafe alongside the road (no ascertainable kin link): R2 "for soap for her clothes."
- To a co-worker/home boy's child living in a nearby village: 50c "for sweets."

It is notable that the largest of these gifts went either to close relatives, Masopha's mother and brother, or to potential allies to assist in covering the costs of their feasts. It is customary to give a donation at feasts one is explicitly invited to attend. Some of my informants pointed out that this is in lieu of assisting with the preparations for the feast. But Masopha's gifts were somewhat larger than what is normally expected

of an ordinary participant. This is clear in that there were a number of other feasts held during that same 1978/9 Christmas period and Masopha did not mention having given any money to their respective 'owners'. For Masopha, however, it was important to cement his household's ties with these two other village households because both were potential partners for future co-operation. Moreover, by giving a large gift to the principal adviser's son's feast, Masopha could hopefully open up avenues of influence for his being allocated a field. This he reinforced by presenting another relatively large amount to the principal adviser himself.

Masopha's smaller gifts all went to people to whom he felt obligated but who could offer little help in the future. His stated reason for giving them these presents was phrased in terms of a late payment for services rendered: "When I was young our family was poor and we lived quite meagrely. Now that I have a little of my own I feel I must give something to those who helped us then through those difficult times."

Thus far we have considered some of the avenues along which remittances are diffused as gifts. These follow those normative channels idealized as 'traditional' - i.e. along kinship networks, to local authorities and to one's neighbours and friends. But there are also transactions associated with what has sometimes been called the informal sector<sup>6</sup> through which earnings are diffused. These include the purchase, by visiting wage-earners, of beer and food in village beerhouses and the monies they spend at litokofele<sup>7</sup> (sing. = setokofele) held in the community. At each setokofele a list is kept of all those who attend and the amounts each spends, and the names of recently returned younger migrants featured prominently as large spenders on the lists



which I was able to peruse. The extent of their participation - and spending - did, however, tail off towards the end of their respective visits home. Young men spend equally freely at beer-houses which are not associated with litokefele. In an attempt to gain status by creating an impression of wealth they demonstrate their earning ability by spending quite liberally once they return home.

The largest spenders in this way are the younger men, including both those who are as yet unmarried and those who have recently taken wives and are in the early phases of building homesteads. One may argue that they are able to spend quite freely on beer because they do not have the responsibilities of supporting and maintaining as large households as have the older more established migrants. But those younger men are still establishing themselves in the community. Their concern to create and cement social relationships in the community is reflected in their spending patterns which demonstrate both their wealth - and thus their potential usefulness as partners in local co-operation - and their generosity.<sup>8</sup>

Some of the remittances which reach home are invested locally in the hope of some added return. Thus wives become members of savings-clubs with which a setokofele is associated. In addition to the profits which such investments may bring, participation in savings-clubs is one way for young women to establish and cement bonds of friendship in the community. These are important not only for the new homestead of a young wife which is in the process of being built up. Virilocal marriage prevails in Lesotho and a new young wife often has few substantive relations in the community in which she goes to live after her marriage (cf. Spiegel: 1975b: 70-1). Through savings-clubs she may

find others who can offer her material assistance in times of need.

Investment in arable agriculture is another way in which remittances are expended although this is more common among the landholding households which I discuss in Chapter VI. Some landless households do, however, invest small amounts in agriculture through hiring/borrowing some of a landholding household's land. They thus gain temporary use of another's field - or part of a field - in exchange for some financial support. Such an arrangement is commonly made with a relative.

There were two examples of this in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng during the 1976/7 season. In one case the household had been loaned a field fragment by the household head's wife's widowed mother who lived in a nearby village. The other case involved young Masopha whom we met earlier.

Case 5.1 Masopha's FF had 'hired' out to his grandson's wife one Sotho acre<sup>9</sup> of his own field. She provided seed which he planted for her during ploughing. For this she paid him R2 and also remained less specifically indebted to him. Yet the yield she derived from this patch was but a small supplement to her husband's above average wages, and the outlay - in unrecorded gifts to her HFF - was probably greater than the value of the harvest.

The arrangement thus appears to have been of greater immediate benefit to the old grandfather. But the young couple's having entered into it suggests their anxiousness to be allocated a field. By making evident their willingness to support him, they hoped that the old grandfather might arrange to have some of his land re-allocated to their household.

Masopha's young wife made it clear that she felt done down by not having already been allocated a field because they had already developed their homestead site and had thus reached a point where they might be allocated a field; and Masopha himself complained that an application he had made for a field in 1972 - before his wife had had any children - had been unsuccessful. Paradoxically - for it was Masopha's above average earnings which had allowed them to build two solid dwelling houses quite rapidly - his wife pointed to his recurrent absences as the cause of their landlessness. Without him at home, she said, no application could properly be submitted to the development committee<sup>10</sup>, and they were thus bypassed for arable allocations -

this not withstanding the fact that her husband gave regular gifts to the chieftainess' principal adviser on his visits home.

Not all households are equally successful in building their homesteads. Already during the early developmental phases differences are quite noticeable. Wage-earnings, as we have seen, are essential both for acquiring a wife and obtaining a homestead site and later fields. Those young husbands who, through illness, are unable to find employment as labour migrants are often unable to establish homesteads of their own, at least for some time. With luck some do manage to find jobs - at relatively minimal pay rates - with the local road gang. Others must earn their sustenance as herders for wealthier local stock owners or depend on hand-outs from their extended families. They remain unmarried or head small family units presently incorporated in larger households.

But even those who do manage to find regular employment in South Africa are differentiated by their relative earning power. This is partly reflected in their success in building homesteads. The average (mean) basic monthly wage of the six young miners whose households we are here considering was about R107 during 1976/7. But their basic wages ranged from around R40 to R180 per month.

Mpho, an underground team leader, was earning R180 in June 1977 while Michael, a surface worker with a deformed arm was earning R42 per month in November 1976. During the twelve months ending in June 1977 Mpho earned a gross amount of R2 258. On his discharge at that stage he was offered a bonus of R51 if he returned to work within three months. This he did, and within three weeks of his return his basic wage had been increased to just under R200 per month. Michael, on the other hand, after also spending twelve months at work had earned a gross amount of R633, and he received only a guarantee of re-employment if he returned to work within three months of his discharge in November 1976. He did not, however, take this up.

The effects of these differences in earning power are apparent in the community. Those households which have young heads who are relatively well paid miners are likely to be successful in building their homesteads. They can quite easily employ local craftsmen for building, thatching etc., and they can afford to call frequent work-parties to extend the levelled out portion of a residential site or to make part of it into a small vegetable garden. Through their greater earnings, these households have the potential to build up herds of livestock soon and to be allocated fields as these became available; and it is the wives in these households who have the resources to accumulate through investment in savings-clubs and litokofele.

Thus these households have the potential to utilize most effectively the two primary resources of wage labour earnings and agricultural production as well as the secondary resource associated with small-scale trading. And yet, paradoxically, the effort involved in being successful in wage labour mitigates against concurrent success in agriculture. Prolonged absence from home makes application for a field more difficult while the apparent security of recurrently earning a good wage - albeit temporary in the long-term - may breed a kind of complacency as regards the security of landholding. A related paradox has been spotlighted by Murray who remarks on "the irony that the migrant labour system, which is the means by which Basotho find the cash to establish legitimate marital relationships, is itself the largest threat to marital stability" (Murray: 1976b: 99). Much appears therefore to be left to the relict wives who attempt, through building up herds - "my duty at home is to buy cattle and other available livestock" - and through other avenues like litokofele and beer brewing etc., to demonstrate at home the

'successfulness' of their households.

The households of mine workers earning below average wages, on the other hand, are likely to struggle to build homesteads. Whereas 34 year old Mpho, for instance, had already been the jural head of his own homestead for some years, 30 year old Michael, although the principle breadwinner, still resided with his mother in what had been her landless homestead. He was, however, now accepted as the household head.

For such households, success in agriculture is all important for security as wage-earning potential is not very great. But, for those earning well below the average, lack of success in earning wages makes acquisition of livestock or fields that much more difficult as virtually all the money remitted is required for sustenance and clothing. Wives are thus unable to accumulate locally at the same rate as wives of the more successful wage-earners: They do participate in litkofele, but with very small amounts invested and only in order to supplement their meagre incomes. Some also assist in weeding and harvesting other households' fields in exchange for a small portion of the harvest.

The households of young miners earning around the average basic wage are both able and sufficiently concerned to build up small herds and to be allocated land. But such allocations often depend on local status and indirectly on earning power. There appears to be a tendency to exaggerate amounts earned and to elevate oneself in terms of job status on the mines, as the case which follows demonstrates. This indicates at the micro level the dovetailing into one another of the 'world' of industrial labour and that of the rural home.

Case 5.2 Neo is an underground mine labourer who, in 1976 was 29 years old. He heads a landless household which has been recently established. In 1976/7 it consisted of one

small flat iron-roofed stone house. He then had plans to build another house and, during a visit home near the end of 1976, he terraced a part of the homestead site for a small vegetable garden. By 1978/9, when I returned to the field, a second house had been completed. Although Neo had already established his own homestead, ties with his widowed mother's household remained strong, a condition he attempted to preserve by sporadically remitting some of his earnings to his mother, 'MaNeo.

At age 19 and having completed six years of schooling Neo had signed his first contract to work on a gold mine. By January 1977 he was being attested for the seventh time, and he returned to the same mine on which he had worked for his last five contracts. His spells at work had ranged from 14 to 22 months over the ten year period while he had never spent more than five months on a home visit: "I wanted to make sure that I'd be back at work before my bonus expired."

During his first contract he had worked as a winch driver. He had then had successive promotions so that during his spell from October 1974 to August 1976 he had left off his work as a shift boss's 'piccanin' to become a leading hand on the pipes, tracks and ventilation section. By that stage, he felt, he had had to be promoted: "I no longer liked that job because I'd been doing it for a long time by then. Then ... I was promoted to become a foromane (leading hand = foreman)." That he was thus making progress and had gained a form of job status was important to him for he felt that this increased his standing at home and thus bettered his chances of being allocated fields.

For what seemed to be the same reason Neo claimed that his basic wage was far in excess of what he really received. Whereas mine records indicated that his per shift basic earnings were R3,70 (i.e. R96 per month), he insisted that he earned a basic wage of R6.00 per shift (i.e. R156 per month) an amount well in excess of the average for his village peers. This he did, it would seem, in the hope that he would be able to increase his chances of being allocated a field relatively soon through demonstrating the relative wealth and status he had achieved at work.

In addition to his basic wage Neo claimed to be earning about R30 per month on overtime and another R10 per month for sewing and doing odd jobs for others in the hostel. Although no figures of his total earnings are available from mine records we can estimate them to have totalled about R2 000 during his spell from October 1974 to August 1976. Of this, mine records show a total of R554 remitted through the remitted pay scheme, while interviews with both Neo and his wife, 'MaLehloa, suggested that a further R300 in cash and R160 in kind - mostly clothing - had been sent or brought home. He thus repatriated about half of his total earnings. Of the total remitted, he spent R140 on house construction and bridewealth payments, R40 on household equipment and another R40 to purchase livestock.

Although Neo sporadically sent money directly to his mother, most remittances were directed to his wife, 'MaLehloa, who was expected, however, to give some of these remittances to her mother-in-law. This Neo insisted upon in order to assure 'MaNeo of his continuing support: And just

before his return home in August 1976 Neo remitted a large sum (R240) directly to his mother, hoping that this would reassure her further that she could depend for subsistence on his remittances, and would thus be willing to have re-allocated to him at least part of her two fields.

'MaNeo, however, was adamant that her son's support was inadequate and that her harvest was, in any case, not sufficient for herself. She had, in the past, had to supplement her own income by brewing and selling beer in Qacha's Nek, and if she lost part of her harvest, she felt, this might become necessary again. Furthermore, she pointed out, her HBS, an absconder, held a field which had frequently been left fallow and had lain unploughed for some time. Neo, she suggested, ought to have applied to the chieftainness and development committee to have that field allocated to him.

Neo, hoping nevertheless to convince his mother to part with some of her arable land allocation, attempted to participate in the working of her fields. 'MaNeo had had a long standing share-cropping arrangement for one field. This was directly between herself and Louis of Lithabeng. But Neo insisted that it was he who hired Louis to plough and plant and he who in fact was share-cropping with his mother.<sup>11</sup> The confusion as regards this arrangement was exacerbated during the 1976/7 ploughing season when Louis - having found himself with a severely diminished income - had enlisted for the mines, leaving Neo, then visiting home, to muscle in on the ploughing, and thus have a claim on his mother. For a similar reason Neo voluntarily assisted with the work of ploughing the fields of the chieftainness' HB, an older widowed cultivator alone in his household, in the hope that this would improve his standing with the development committee. And it is likely that his most uncharacteristic return from work in July 1977, only six months after having been attested, was in order to be present again during the new ploughing season, and thus hopefully to reinforce his claim to the allocation of a field. On his return, his wife had been given money to prepare for and call a work-party in order to level their homestead site further in preparation for building another house. This was to demonstrate yet again Neo's commitment to 'home' and his assumed eligibility to be granted a field. By the time I left the field in January 1979 his homestead still did not include a field.

## 2. Building a Homestead II - Absconders Re-establishing Contact

Before the introduction of border control in 1963 emigration from Lesotho into South Africa was still legally possible and some Basotho became absconders (machepha) who left their rural homes to settle permanently near their places of employment. More recently some of these absconders who had lost contact with

their homes have attempted to recover the security of a 'home in the country'. They have returned home to rural villages like Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng to obtain residential sites and to establish themselves as oscillating migrants while continuing in employment in South Africa. But, because of their prolonged absence from the rural community, they have not been allocated fields; and their lack of local influence undermines the likelihood of their being granted arable rights.

There were three households of this kind in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng. Each was headed by a middle-aged man who had spent many years employed in the non-mining sectors in South Africa. These were men who had settled and raised families in the urban areas of South Africa. Their respective households included their wives and adolescent or adult children, some of them married. In two cases their wives were second wives 'taken in town': one had been taken after the man had been widowed; the other was a simultaneous (polygynous) second 'town' wife whom he later brought home, much to the chagrin of his first wife, whom he had left behind when he absconded, and who still resided in their original Lithabeng homestead.

Another of these households also had its origin in the local area, though in neither Ha Makhaola nor Lithabeng. Its head had been brought up in a nearby village. Around the time he was attempting to re-establish his roots at home a house had become vacant in Lithabeng and he had purchased the structure and gained rights to the homestead site from the development committee. The third household had originated in a remote mountain village. For many years the whole family had lived in Natal, and they still had urban residential rights there. But recently they had formally immigrated (removed)<sup>12</sup> to Ha Makhaola where a house was



built alongside the road. During most of the year the homestead was left in the care of a servant who used it as a beerhouse to tap the passing trade.

In two of these three households the head and an adult son were both wage earners. All three of these household heads had been relatively successful wage-earners. But now, with the age of retirement coming closer, they felt threatened by the insecurity of tenure and livelihood that goes with retirement as foreign Africans in South Africa. They did expect to receive some form of pension from their employers, but this they felt would be inadequate, especially for town living; and a pension without a supplementary source of income could turn out to offer only a false sense of security. One of these men made this quite clear when he said:

How much would I get? Something like R20 (per month) Ha ha! Even now I earn R36 per week and it is not enough for me for just five days. Tell me then, what will R20 for 30 days be worth? Right! You see, there are many who go for a pension without looking either ahead or behind (i.e. without considering the consequences) and for them a pension is very heavy (may bring added difficulties). It is inadequate. It would be preferable to take a pension if you also have something else on which to live ...

Unlike most labour migrants these returning absconders do not regard agriculture - as presently practised - as a reliable source of security. Nor are they keen to continue as oscillating migrants. Having been used to living near to their places of employment, they would be happier to find work as industrial labourers at home. In addition some are concerned that Lesotho's labour is being lost to South Africa. The man quoted above, was quite explicit in this regard:

... In Lesotho there is no work like that which I do there (in South Africa), like that work in engineering. I now know how to make iron and to work with electricity ... although I have no (formal) education. I work by using my own common sense. If Lesotho had men like me who do this

work, I would be ready to work here (with them)... Now is the time that Lesotho ought to learn to do these things for herself ... But as Lesotho cannot offer us work we go to the Republic where both our ability and our earnings are exploited ... My knowledge and wisdom are now being wasted in the Republic, and I shall be sent back home once I can no longer do anything. I will have become 'like a piece of scrap' with my wisdom used up there ...<sup>13</sup>.

Men like this do not regard the land as a totally useless asset, however. They hope that agricultural practice can be improved so that they can participate in agriculture profitably. Their experience in South African industrial towns has provided examples of this although, as lifelong landless wage labourers they lack any agricultural experience. The same man's comments are again instructive:

No, as I have never done agricultural work I cannot bear witness as to what may benefit agriculture. But there in Gaudeng (the place of gold)<sup>14</sup> I have seen farms where the people called Italians (MaItali) sow the year round - in January, December and June, it's all the same. And they take water from the river with taps and machines and they pump it onto their fields.

Then, pointing to a nearby field alongside a perennial mountain stream, he said:

If I had a field like that one I would change it by cultivating it the Italian way (SeItali) by planting vegetables. I would buy a pump and hosepipes and I would work both summer and winter crops. And I would make a 'market' at the corner (of the field) and sell cabbages and carrots. And for money I'd not go to Gaudeng.

Their long absences from the villages, and their consequent lack of local influence, mitigate against their being allocated land. The earlier decision to rely on wage earnings and to remain in town, has resulted in little provision having been made for their retirement in the rural community. Without having returned home at frequent intervals they have had neither cause nor opportunity to gain local status or to accumulate social credit in the community.

Case 5.3 Mpona, the man who had deserted his first wife when he absconded and had returned home years later with a second wife had, in fact, lost social standing in the community. But he then settled his second wife in a new homestead in Lithabeng and he began to remit regularly to her. She soon involved herself in community activities, like litokofele, and she assisted others in weeding and harvesting their fields. Moreover, Mpona had purchased a few small stock for this new homestead and these were put out with the household of an old retired man in Lithabeng. This improved Mpona's position in the community a little. This second homestead was, nevertheless, likely to remain landless.

With permanent homes in the South African urban areas the other two households had little reason to remit money to people in the community. Most of their members still resided in 'town' and thus there was little of their earnings diffused in the rural community. Such households do have to spend on providing accommodation and keeping their houses in repair. They also spend quite freely during the time - normally over Christmas - when the whole family returns home for a visit. But the amounts diffused are very small in comparison with the sums spent by households which have relict members and more regularly oscillating migrants.

A small proportion of these households' earnings is remitted for investment in livestock. Like the younger landless households they too invest in a few small stock which are then put out to other households. But their participation in village activities is limited to those occasions when they spend time there, and there were few regular avenues along which their earnings reached other village households.

### 3. Insecure Homesteads - Wage-Earning Women Without Proper Homesteads

Most contemporary rural communities in Lesotho include a few landless households headed by women. They are often quite

small. These are among the households which Murray (1978: 137) describes as severely disadvantaged in that they have low domestic productive capacities and minimal direct access to wage earnings.

In Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng there were two landless households headed by wage earning women. There were also five landless woman-headed households which lacked any wage-labouring member. These I deal with later. I distinguish them on the basis of direct access to wage-earnings. The distinction is, however, analytical rather than substantive. All households like these are quite destitute and have to eke out their existence from whatever resources they can, though those in which there are wage-earning women can be sure of a small but regular income.

Neither of the two households headed by wage-earning women received an income large enough to allow them to spend more than incidental amounts in the community. Their earnings were thus only minimally diffused through the community. In both cases there was only marginal participation in litokofele, brewing for sale and so forth because of a lack of resources which could be thus invested. But local wage-labour - either on a piece-work or full-time basis, in domestic, agricultural or brewing activities - did provide some income in both cash and kind.

Both of these two households consisted of socially dislocated individuals. They had fallen by the wayside of the 'modal' cycle of domestic development and were unlikely to acquire access to land. I present them as two case studies.

Case 5.4 Thato was the 58 year old deserted wife of a long time absconder from a remote mountain village. For many years she and her only daughter - now married in Lithabeng - had roamed from village to village in both the Qacha's Nek and Matatiele districts. Wherever Thato had found wage employment, as a homestead caretaker,

brewing assistant etc., they had stopped for some time. Previously she had been employed as a nurse-maid in a village adjacent to Ha Makahola and Lithabeng, and more recently she had moved to Ha Makhaola where she now earned a monthly wage (R5 plus board) for brewing beer and doing various domestic chores in the busiest beerhouse/cafe in the village.

She had never formally removed to Ha Makhaola and thus she had no land rights there at all. The chieftainess allowed her to live in a vacant homestead belonging to the chiefly lineage, but her tenure there was insecure.<sup>15</sup> She owned no livestock nor poultry, subsisting on her earnings at the beerhouse both in wages and in 'gifts' from travellers passing by. Her only other source of income was her intermittent receipt of cash as bohali (bridewealth) for her daughter.<sup>16</sup>

Case 5.5 The second of these two households was headed by Hilda, a 50 year old unmarried and childless domestic working in a Natal town, who had previously helped to bring up her younger brother when their unmarried mother had passed away. Hilda had taken over the homestead, in Lithabeng, where the now adult but destitute and disabled brother, Lithakong, and his wife and four children lived.

On reaching adulthood Lithakong had enlisted for the mines, but he was repatriated after a mining accident.<sup>17</sup> After spending some years in Lesotho he married and went with his wife to work on a farm in East Griqualand for some four and a half years. They later returned to the village and Lithakong was employed by a local mission as a labourer. Later he, and also sometimes his 17 year old son, were able to earn small amounts as herders and ploughing assistants in the village; during the fieldwork period Lithakong was convicted for theft and sentenced to five months' imprisonment. His wife, meanwhile, earned small amounts, almost always in kind, by assisting with weeding and harvesting others' fields, by washing clothes for the chieftainess and others and by collecting firewood and selling it in the village. In addition, their oldest son had recently been employed as a herder by the chieftainess' principal adviser.

Hilda herself was earning a small regular wage. But it was inadequate to support her brother, whom she did not trust and she remitted virtually none of it. She did, however, bring small amounts home with her when she visited Lithabeng. The household had no livestock. Lithakong's wife attempted to cultivate a few vegetables in the homestead yard but she had to abandon them to go to a village some distance away where she could earn a little by weeding for others. Nor was she able to supplement their income by the sale of beer: "Because I have nowhere to earn the money needed to buy ingredients for brewing joala. Right now I ought to take my child to the clinic but I don't know where I'm to find the money to pay for that."

Both of these households included a wage-earner although in neither case did wages provide even for subsistence needs.

At the same time neither household was able, for lack of capital, to invest with any degree of success. To this extent then they were marginal not only to the dominant industrial sector but also to the dependent but supportive rural sector.

University of Cape Town



A work-party collecting stones for building.



A stone-mason  
at work.

## VI LANDHOLDING WAGE-DEPENDENT HOUSEHOLDS

Most households with wage-earning members hold usufruct over arable land. Of the 83 households in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng 67 had one or more fields; 36 of these had at least one wage-earning member on whose remittances the household depended. These remittances may also be used for supporting the household's agricultural operations. In a sense, then, the agricultural production of these households is subsidized by wage-earned remittances. In this chapter I consider these households which do hold arable allotments but still depend heavily on remitted earnings. I also examine some of the ways in which wage-earnings are used in conjunction with, and - in some cases - to extend, local agricultural production. I am thus concerned with some of the strategies used to consolidate and utilize a rural base while wage-earnings are still available.

The household composition of the 36 households of this type was quite varied. It ranged from elementary families to extended families comprising the head's co-laterals and their respective affines. Some extended across three and even four generations.

Despite their common access to both wages and arable land these households can be differentiated in terms of their utilization of these two resources. These differences frequently correspond to the domestic developmental phase reached by the household. Thus we can see a progression over cyclical time in the manner in which wage-earnings and local resources are combined, although success in doing so varies between households in the same developmental phase.

Wages reaching this type of household are diffused through the community in a variety of ways. As for the landless house-



holds still setting up house they may spend some remittances on house construction, on bridewealth transfers and on building up a herd, primarily now for draught purposes. Money is spent also on efforts to increase their arable land holdings. Wives left at home may participate in savings-clubs and litokofele while their men purchase beer and give gifts to their linyatsi. What most markedly sets these households apart from those discussed in Chapter V is their need to spend some of their earnings directly on agriculture.

I have referred earlier to the requirement that landholders are expected to work their fields at least once every two years or face deprivation of their usufruct over them. Although this rule is rarely implemented immediately it acts as a sanction encouraging households to ensure that their soil is turned regularly. Many wage-earners must remit money so that their households can hire the necessary labour, draught cattle and implements to do this (cf. Turner: 1978: 244). Frequently the hired contractors are from households which lack a wage-earning member. In this way some wage-earnings are diffused in the community.

For many households the cost of hiring others to work their fields may prove to be greater than the yields derived. That this occurs suggests that some fields are being worked primarily to hold them rather than to derive a harvest. In the 1930s it was already being argued that with wage-labour on the mines offering an alternative source of income, many Basotho were making little effort to work their fields (Ashton: 1939: 155). Wallman (1972; cf. 1976) more recently implied a similar finding when she said that Basotho, with both access to relatively reliable wage-labour earnings and experience of the living standards of the industrial sector, were not motivated to produce

agriculturally.<sup>18</sup> My own research bears this out although indicating that it is linked to the developmental cycle. It does not, however, represent a trend towards abandonment of agriculture. It seems rather to affect only some households which are able, presently, to maintain themselves from remittances. Their expenditure on meagre ploughing and planting is, however, an added source of diffused income for those whom they hire to turn their fields.

In addition to hiring there are other types of arrangements which can be made to ensure that a field is ploughed and planted: These include share-cropping (seahlolo) arrangements; reciprocal assistance (re a thusana) and unequal relationships referred to as ho kena lehafing. I discuss these in some detail below.

### 1. Herd Building

As households develop domestically they attempt to make arrangements like these rather than to depend purely on hiring labour to work their fields. The process of homestead building includes the creation of inter-household social relationships of co-operation beyond the household. One method of creating such ties is by entering mutual help arrangements with other households for managing the land. By purchasing cattle for draught purposes, households increase their own value as members in co-operative companies. Purchase of cattle and building up a herd also provide another avenue for the expenditure of remittances which may, indirectly, benefit other households in the community. In the long run, assets such as cattle, implements and co-operative arrangements to work fields can provide access to the remittances of younger households who must hire others to plough their land.

The process of herd building begins, as we have seen, in the early phases of domestic development with the purchase of small stock. These animals are relatively inexpensive, multiply comparatively quickly and are required for slaughter for certain small feasts such as pitiki which is held at the end of a new mother's confinement. But cattle are the more important animals, both ritually and because they provide draught-power for agriculture. Cows are favoured for purchase over oxen and people are quite at ease in spanning them in for draught purposes in the fields. One man remarked that even a pregnant cow can be used in a team pulling a plough or planter and that it will also produce further animals for the herd.

Peter, a 40 year old miner, was attempting to consolidate his position at home for his impending retirement (see Case 6.4 below). Among other things he attempted to ensure his membership of a local ploughing-company. To this end he had purchased three cows in South Africa on his return home after completing a contract on the mines. These he intended introducing into the ploughing team which was then about to work his fields. He also provided labour as a junior partner in the company. But the cows, he said, were not only for draught purposes. He hoped that soon they would begin bearing calves for his herd.

Using cows for draught purposes as well as for milk and breeding is no doubt related to the absolute scarcity of draught cattle. Reports from other parts of the sub-continent and of earlier periods suggest, however, that those setting out to build herds select oxen first and that they purchase cows only later in order to be able to replenish the herd. Such discrimination is possible, however, only if herds are quite large.<sup>19</sup> But in communities such as Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng, where the largest holding of cattle was fifteen head and where 83,1% of the households held five or fewer head (see Table 4.2; cf. Murray 1976a: 101), cows from which a herd can grow are more valuable than oxen especially as they too can be broken to the yoke.

In recent years - since the end of the long drought period, in 1970, and the rises in mine labour wages since 1971<sup>20</sup> - large numbers of cattle have been purchased in South Africa and brought into Lesotho by returning labour migrants.<sup>21</sup> The cattle which Peter (above) purchased were obtained in Matatiele on his return home.

Some informants told me how cattle can be purchased during one's time at work on a mine. It is arranged through one of the White overseers who has a contact with farmers in the vicinity of the mine and who acts as a middleman in the deal. The cattle are then railed to Matatiele from whence they are herded up the road into Lesotho. While I was in the field I quite often observed herds of up to twenty such imported beasts being driven along the road past Ha Makhaola towards the more remote mountain settlements.

These are frequently low grade animals and on occasion they may not even reach home alive. This was the experience of one man who came home to Lithabeng just before Christmas 1978 having attempted to bring some cattle with him. Before taking his leave he purchased three cows which were then loaded onto a train. While they were being loaded one died and by the time they reached Matatiele another had gone blind and was close to death. Only one of the three ever reached Lithabeng - and that was suffering from diseased udders.

Despite these difficulties cattle remain an important area of investment, for they provide the key to membership of a ploughing-company as more than just a junior labour-supplying member. Moreover, given adequate grazing and water, and protection from stock theft and the hazards of steep mountainside pasturage they may promise a better return than can any other form of investment.

But, as one older man pointed out, these pre-conditions cannot be assured as the pastures are already quite depleted and losses of stock over the Transkei border are on the increase.<sup>22</sup>

Fielder (1973: 338-9) has pointed out, in discussing the Ila, that a herd of cattle becomes a potential profit making enterprise only when it comprises at least 30 to 40 head.<sup>23</sup> But this is larger than any of the herds in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng. Cattle, and livestock in general, are a potentially good, albeit risky investment. But they do not provide anywhere near a reliable and adequate income for any of the households of the community. They may, however, provide an emergency resource which can provide a supplement in times of need, but at the expense of eating into one's investment. That may occur in the later phases of domestic development. For households in earlier phases, the most important function of cattle is the draught-power they provide and the access this gives their owner to membership of a ploughing-company.

## 2. Purchase of Implements

Implements are another necessary item in the inventory of a ploughing-company although, as Murray (1976a: 100ff.) has pointed out, draught animals and labour are the most important and two scarcest resources for such companies. If a household cannot offer labour on a regular basis its only way into a company is through the provision of cattle, although implements which go along with such animals will increase their value in such transactions.

The purchase of implements is not a priority in the way the purchase of cattle is. Implements are relatively inexpensive and they are quite readily available in the area.<sup>24</sup> In August

1977, for example, a nearby store had stocks of ploughs each selling for R39. A household with a wage-earning remitting member could thus purchase a plough relatively easily, and for an amount much the same as many men frequently spend in town and near their places of employment on articles of clothing both for themselves and their wives. Of course, this figure does not include the cost of yokes and chains (R4 each at that time), nor does it refer to the rather more expensive implements like draught cultivators and planters (respectively R58 and R110 each). But it does indicate that a plough and a set of yokes and chains are not beyond the means of most wage-earners. There is, however, little point in purchasing these if one's household does not have draught animals or the opportunity to use such implements as part of a contribution to a ploughing-company.

### 3. Agricultural Co-operation

Membership of a ploughing-company is an important resource especially for the declining years of a household's domestic cycle. Murray (1976a: 100) has stressed how unpredictable and brief the ploughing and planting season in Lesotho is and he has emphasized the need either to hire or to have some form of co-operative arrangement in order to plough and plant one's fields during this short critical period. As the retirement of the household head draws closer, the household's members turn to the establishment of co-operative arrangements to ensure that its fields will be worked. One form which these may take involves co-operation in the ploughing, planting and occasionally mechanical cultivating activities only. These I refer to as ploughing-companies. Other arrangements extend over the whole agricultural season from ploughing and planting until the final harvesting.

Share-cropping (seahlole) is of this type, and I discuss it below. One also finds women co-operating with weeding and/or harvesting, and work-parties may be called for these activities (see Chapter VIII). Here I consider co-operation which results in ploughing-companies.

#### (a) Ploughing-companies

The ideal ploughing-company for households attempting to consolidate their rural bases is one in which the partners understand their relationship to be equal. Such a situation may arise, for example, where two households with similar sized herds and both having implements combine these resources and their labour to plough and plant their own fields as well as those of households whose fields they are hired to turn. Another example might be where one household's cattle are put out to a second which uses them as a basis for a draught team to work both household's fields using labour from both partners. In such an arrangement none of the partners can claim seniority over any other and they say of their relationship that re a thusana (we help one another).

Frequently, however, a company comprises two households who have an equitable relationship with one another plus one or more junior partners who contribute a smaller input - either labour or one or two cattle - to the company's resources. The junior partners, or their animals, will then participate in the ploughing and planting activities of the company which will afterwards work their respective fields. But because they have put lesser inputs into the company they remain junior partners and in most cases their fields are turned only after those of the senior partners. Wallman has cited 'custom' to identify the order of priority in which the fields of members of a ploughing-company are worked.

Apparently citing an informant, she says "... First always do the field of the man with the oxen; he takes first place. Then the man with the hoe (or plough)<sup>25</sup>. The man who brings only his labour comes last; he is the man with nothing ..." (Wallman: 1969: 53).

Other common configurations include one in which there is just one senior partner and one junior partner. Such an uneven or unequal relationship may be between a stockholder who lacks adequate labour and a junior partner who can contribute only labour. One also finds chains of seniority in arrangements whereby a junior partner may contribute one ox and both his own labour and that of his own junior partner. In situations where two households have an equal partnership each may bring its own junior partner into the company. The relationship is then not between company and junior partners but between each of the senior partners in association and their respective junior partners. In these uneven relationships the junior partner is said ho kena lehafing (lit. = to enter the armpit) of the senior partner.

Turner (1978: 246ff.) has put these two types of arrangement together as one form of co-operation which he represents by the phrase "re lema le eena: I (we) plough with him", while Wallman (1969: 53) talks of 'making kopano' which is "an informal (ploughing) arrangement between three or four friends."<sup>26</sup> In Ha Makha-ola and Lithabeng people make a very clear distinction between those arrangements in which the co-operating parties see their relationship as equitable (re a thusana) and those in which one party is said to be junior to the other (ke kena lehafing lahae: I enter his armpit). Attempts to achieve the former status, as an equal partner, often go through an initial period during which there is an uneven relationship. This is commonly the situation



for households in the process of consolidating their rural resources, for they frequently lack labour for inclusion in ploughing-companies.

Over twenty years ago Sheddick (1954: 83ff.) pointed out that no homestead can manage independently as a unit of arable agricultural production and that all had, of necessity, to enter various forms of co-operation. Among the arrangements which he discussed he included one which resembles one of the configurations represented in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng by the phrase ho kena lehafing. Sheddick, however, considered this to be a form of hired labour: "When a man engages labour for work with his own personal equipment he may either pay the labourer in cash or he may allow him the use of his oxen and plough so that he (the labourer) may work his own fields." (ibid: 84; his parentheses; my emphasis). In the agricultural context I prefer to refer only to arrangements whereby there is a cash or kind payment for the services rendered as hired labour. Arrangements in which there are exchanges of labour for other factors of production involve a far greater element of trust than do those in which the transaction is completed by the transfer of cash.

Ho kena lehafing follows a normative pattern in which the junior partner provides labour or one or two beasts to assist in ploughing and planting the senior partner's and his own fields. The senior partner contributes the larger part of the draught team, the implements and often also some labour. Each landholder provides his own seed and fertilizer (if used). The contributions of the two parties may vary, however, and the distinguishing line between ho kena lehafing and re a thusana is rather blurred, with other factors - not directly related to ploughing and planting - coming into play. The relationship ends after the ploughing

and planting has been completed, although occasionally it may also include mechanical cultivating. The arrangement may, however, be renewed annually for any number of seasons and it may develop an assumed permanence.

Ho kena lehafing is not limited to agricultural co-operation. It can apply to any situation in which one exchanges one's labour or other assets for a return on one's investment.<sup>27</sup> Thus one enters such an arrangement by offering one's own labour (and possibly other assets), by purchasing another's labour to act as one's proxy, or by putting up the working capital for an enterprise like a beerhouse or cafe.

One man from Ha Makhaola did just that for a local beerhouse in financial trouble. He provided the matla (lit. = strength, energy, influence - cf. the Nguni term amandla = power, presently in wide usage in a political context) to allow the enterprise to purchase ingredients and thus to continue functioning. The basics for the enterprise (the house, brewing drums, mugs, etc.) were owned by the woman who brewed and sold the beer, and whose operation the man underwrote. He described the arrangement as one in which he had 'entered the armpit' of the woman who owned the beerhouse and brewed there. In return for his assistance he received a share of the enterprise's profits. The partnership was not very long-lived, however. Once the owner was again able to purchase her ingredients independently the man's interests fell away. In a sense, then, his matla had effectively provided her with a short-term loan.

Ho kena lehafing in this form is, however, the exception rather than the rule. It is most frequently associated with co-operation in agricultural activities. Let us now consider the system of share-cropping (seahlolo) which allows for co-operation over the whole agricultural cycle, but through which a landholding household loses a part of its arable output to an outside contracting household.

(b) Share-cropping

Share-cropping (seahlolo) relationships have recently been described in some detail by Turner (1978: 238-41). Briefly, they involve a contractor accepting the responsibility to plough and plant another's field, and to assist with the weeding and harvesting, in exchange for a stipulated share (normally half) of the crop yield. The landholder may provide seed and is expected to do half the work of weeding and harvesting, while the ploughing and planting is done by the contractor.

Murray (1976a: 103-9; 1977: 85) has suggested that share-cropping is one route through which those without fields direct some of their remittances into agriculture and thus gain indirect use of some arable land:

The most common (seahlolo-type) arrangement is made between one party having no field but having access to oxen and plough and labour or with funds to hire a tractor, and another party having a field but none of the necessary capital resources (Murray: 1976a: 103-4; cf. Turner: 1978: 240-1).<sup>28</sup>

This would mean that share-cropping provides an avenue for the diffusion of wage-earnings through agricultural activities and simultaneously provides access to land for households which are landless. There are two mechanisms through which this might operate in a community, like Ha Makhaola, where tractors are not readily available. One is that households in receipt of remittances, but which do not have fields, provide cash inputs in order to hire third parties who work the fields of otherwise destitute landholding households. This involves the landless wage-dependent household paying for the ploughing and planting of the fields concerned and assisting with the weeding and harvesting. The other mechanism is that a landless household deploys its own labour and wage-purchased draught-team and implements to plough

and plant a landholding household's fields; while also assisting with weeding and harvesting. In both cases this is done in exchange for a half-share of the harvest.

Other than the case of Neo (Case 5.2) who, rather dubiously, claimed that he was his mother's seahlolo partner through his hiring the contractor, I found no evidence of such arrangements involving landless households in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng. In cases where landless households' remittances were used in agriculture this was through gifts to parental landholding households. These, in turn, were utilized to hire local labour. But this type of arrangement does not give the landless household a right to a share of the harvest.

The first mechanism would appear to be more prevalent in areas where tractors are readily available for hire by landless share-cropping contractors. As regards the second, Turner (1976: 240) has pointed out that "In some areas it is uncommon for a household to advance to ... where it owns cattle and implements, without being able to obtain a field." Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng appear to be in one such area, and (younger) landless households do not own the cattle and implements needed for contracting on a seahlolo basis.

There were a couple of cases in which the wife of a wage-earner called a work-party to weed the field of an older landholding household, in exchange for a portion of the harvest. They used remittances to purchase the food and drink provided for the work-party. These were women whose own households held some land. The fields they arranged to weed were fields held by the chieftainess' principal adviser who could easily have mustered the necessary labour without their assistance. Providing assistance with the weeding and harvesting of a field is an accepted

way for a woman to increase her income in kind in any one year, for such assistance is normally paid for by a portion of the field's harvest (see Chapter VIII). The arrangements of the two women mentioned above differed from this norm only insofar as they were investing wage-earnings in addition to their own labour in these activities. But theirs was not a relationship of seahlolo. They were merely investing their remittances for a return in kind.

There were a few proper seahlolo (share-cropping) arrangements between households of the two villages. These were between contractors who had land of their own and landholders who lacked the resources to work their own fields. In most cases these contractors were older retired men who attempted to augment their own yields by share-cropping others' land. These arrangements cannot be said to give landless households access to land through their provision of capital inputs. It could be argued, however, that they give households, which are able to find the capital inputs, access to more land than is their jural allocation; and in most cases the capital inputs do derive from remittances.

Wallman (1969: 52) has said that share-cropping (seahlolo) provides a system by which certain households can accumulate through utilizing others' arable resources. She suggests that households which contract to share-crop a number of others' fields increase their effective access to arable land to such a degree that they are able to produce a marketable surplus. Sheddick (1954: 85) has referred to such households as "a class of agricultural capitalists".<sup>29</sup> But in none of the cases of share-cropping in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng did a contracting household have so many such arrangements that it could regularly produce for sale. In most cases contractors preferred to work

on a hired basis or where they could expect a labour return for their services (i.e. a lehafing type of arrangement). This is because most fields are quite small and relatively infertile; and a half-share of the crop is often substantially smaller in value than the income from being hired. Moreover, share-cropping requires that one wait a whole season before obtaining a return which might in any case be rather small.

Contractors prefer to share-crop only on fields which are known to be fertile and from which a reasonable return can be expected. One of the chieftainess' fertile fields was share-cropped by the heir-apparent to the principal advisorship: This arrangement had a status value as well as a material reward for the contractor.

Both Sheddick (1954: 85ff.) and Wallman (1969: 51ff.) have said that share-cropping arrangements are unpopular with landholders because they mean the loss of half a field's yield. This attitude was exemplified by the comment of a woman who was unable to find a contractor willing to be hired to work her field which was known for its fertility and was thus a good prospect for a share-cropping arrangement:

I have a field but I did not plough it because I have no oxen and others refused to be hired to plough. They said they'd agree to plough only on a share-cropping (seahlolo) basis, but I didn't want that. Those people with oxen said they'd not let me hire them but they were prepared to plough by seahlolo only ... Do you think I could accept this and take just one part of the yield while they get the other half? No, that would be the same as not ploughing at all ... they said they would plough by seahlolo but I refused because my field has very fertile soil.

For a landholder, share-cropping is an arrangement which should be avoided. But for households in domestic decline which cannot assemble the labour and draught team needed to turn their fields and which cannot afford to hire a contractor, share-cropping may

be the only resort. Unfortunately such households frequently hold relatively infertile fields and contractors are loathe to accept share-cropping contracts with them.

I now turn from this more general discussion of features common to all landholding wage-dependent households to consider the different priorities these households have as they pass through the successive phases in the domestic cycle. I have thus divided the rest of the chapter into three sections each of which deals with households in a different phase of development. Within each section I discuss households which are both more and less successful in their strategies to build their homesteads.

#### 4. Securing the Land - Establishing a Base

Eight households in the community studied comprised young families in homesteads with land but which were still establishing themselves and creating a reliable base in the community. Six were headed by men and two by women, all of whom were wage-labourers. Three of the men were gold miners in South Africa while another two plus one of the women were industrial workers in Natal. One man and one woman were employed in the local district: the man as a labourer by the nearby Roman Catholic mission, the woman as a cleaner in a Qacha's Nek office.

Four of these households were elementary families; one also included an affinal relative - a child who assisted the wife with domestic chores - and another consisted of an unmarried mother and her children. The other two might be regarded as having fallen by the developmental wayside for they comprised one person each - a young miner whose wife had recently left him, and a young woman whose much older husband had long previously absconded and whose children had died. The mean age of

the six male household heads was 37,5 years (range: 27-38). The two women who headed their own households were 28 and 33 years old respectively. Five of these eight households had one field each; the other three, including one headed by a woman, each held two fields. Stockholdings ranged from nil to 9,6 stock units and only one household had a plough.

Most of these households' fields were ploughed by hired teams and labour. But those with two fields each attempted to make alternative arrangements. In most cases these relatively younger households hired a ploughing team just to turn the soil on their fields once after having strewn seed. But in a few cases they spent the extra money on hiring a team to plough twice and to plant mechanically. In these cases, however, the initial outlay was frequently not recovered in yields obtained from the land.

Reciprocal help without a direct cash input seems to be more likely for a household whose (male) head is employed relatively close to home. Thus in the 1976/7 season, a builder at a nearby mission was himself the junior partner in a ploughing-company, whereas a miner's wife hired someone to act as a proxy in another such company. In both cases, however, the arrangements encountered difficulties. The builder was forced to default in providing labour because he was unable to take time off his job, and in the second case the hired proxy defaulted, although the couple's 15 year old son was able to stay away from school to do the work. It is interesting that, in the second case, the arrangement was one between full brothers' households. Yet the sibling link was not so strong that the resident brother accepted the responsibility of ploughing his absent brother's fields without some material input being provided by the latter's



household. Moreover, the relationship was described as an uneven leahafing-type arrangement into which the miner's household put hired labour and one ox. That such close kin should make such an arrangement reflects the breakdown of mutual reciprocal help between members of the immediate descent group.

Another interesting arrangement is that entered by 'MaMoroho, a deserted woman whose children had died. Her homestead included two fields.

Case 6.1 'MaMoroho herself was a labour migrant who left her village house unoccupied when she was away at work. But, in order not to be deprived of her two fields she was obliged to find someone to turn them for her. For the moment she did not require their product, so she allowed the contractor to keep that for his own use. The contractor was her absconder husband's FoBS. Using his own company arrangements he ploughed and planted her two fields and, in effect, had temporary usufruct over them. But the arrangement was only temporary and 'MaMoroho hoped that she could, in the future, depend on her HFOBS to work the fields for her when she returned home and needed the product for her own use. For the moment, she pointed out, her only objective was to forestall deprivation so that her future security would be safeguarded. "I will use these fields myself when I come back home to stay (permanently. This will be) once I have decided no longer to go back to work."

The importance of retaining access to fields once allocated is reflected also in the manner in which some of these households hire labour and draught teams at prices in excess of the yields they obtain from their fields. During the 1976/7 season, only one of these households which hired labour obtained a yield from its field which was larger -- and then only minimally -- than its input. That season was a bad one because of late rains at the time of planting. The previous season had been somewhat better and half these households' fields, worked in this manner, returned yields worth more than the cash inputs.

At the relatively early phase in the developmental cycle which these households had then reached, it is fairly common that cash inputs into agricultural production exceed the value

of yields. The homestead is still being built up materially and such losses are accepted as one of the incumbent risks of gaining and retaining usufruct over land in which later security is seen to lie.

As among the landless households discussed above, these households differ from one another in the degree of success with which they manage the two basic resources of wages and agriculture. Furthermore one may see how changes of fortune may have affected a household's relative dependence on the different resources. Two case studies are instructive in this regard. The first (Case 6.2) demonstrates how, after an initial period of success in homestead building, a household may suffer a setback because of difficulties encountered with their wage-earning abilities.

Case 6.2 Some years before I visited Ha Makhaola and Li-thabeng, 38 year old Tumo and his wife, 'MaTanki's homestead had been developing quite steadily. This was after a slow start, for Tumo, initially a mine labourer, was repatriated after sustaining an industrial accident. Tumo was fortunate, however, to find a job with the bottle store in Qacha's Nek and he soon became active also in the local illicit liquor trade. He then married 'MaTanki whom he met in a shebeen where she was selling liquor. A couple of years later Mpatang, Tumo's father, arranged that the chief-tainness and development committee re-allocate a strip of his field to his son so that he might continue to benefit from Tumo's earnings. His right of access to this arable strip stimulated Tumo's interest in agriculture and he began to buy and to apply fertilizer. But then, around the time of the National Emergency in 1970, Tumo left his job in Qacha's Nek and had to look for work elsewhere. He returned to South Africa and managed to obtain poorly paid employment in the poultry industry in Natal. But his remittances were small and his household's involvement in local agriculture soon diminished, while 'MaTanki began to fall back on other ways to augment the homestead income. These included what another informant described as prostitution: "... Tumo took that woman to be his wife when she was already a letekatse (prostitute). I don't know what else to say (how else to put it) ... she was a letekatse roaming about in town (kampong) there, going back and forth with these men from the mines."

At one point 'MaTanki went to visit her husband in Natal, staying there illegally for about a year and neglecting their homestead and field. They returned home together - when news reached them of Tumo's brother's untimely death on the mines - bringing some clothing and a little cash. Within six weeks Tumo had returned to Natal but from then on he failed to remit any significant amounts of money;

again 'MaTanki neglected their field and again she resorted to helping out at one of the cafe/beerhouses alongside the main road and to prostitution. She also assisted in weeding and harvesting others' fields: In 1976/7 this earned her five tins of maize for the household's consumption. During the next season she was again 'visiting' her husband in Natal and their field was worked by Mpatang, Tumo's father, who retained the crop for his own household's use. (See Case 7.8)

Case 6.3 which follows represents a contrasting 'success story' despite the household head's also having suffered an industrial accident on a mine.

Case 6.3 Molefatsi, a 33 year old miner of some years experience, was slightly injured in a mining accident in 1972. But he had returned regularly to the same mine where he was consistently promoted. By early 1975 he had reached a top wage-notch as an underground team leader. At the end of that contract, on his discharge in March 1977, his basic monthly wage was R198, at least R60 of which he claimed to send home every second month.

At home, his wife 'MaToebea worked conscientiously towards building their homestead. Since the spring of 1972 when they had been allocated a tiny fragment of arable land, she had had it ploughed and planted regularly. Their 1975/6 harvest had amounted to more than a bag of beans (worth R25), but in 1976/7, when they spent R5 to hire someone to plough, the crop was destroyed by cutworm. Instead 'MaToebea had then arranged to organise a work-party to weed one of the principal adviser's fields for which she received a tin of maize at harvest time (worth R1.80). But she had spent at least R2.30 on the ingredients for the work-party's food, and had had to prepare it, so the contract was unprofitable if measured purely materially. But it did have the value of demonstrating to the principal adviser that she was sufficiently concerned with agriculture to put herself out to work in the fields despite her household's access to sufficient wage income to purchase its needs directly. And she agreed that her efforts in this regard were not merely to help out the principal adviser's old wife who struggled to do her household's weeding, or to obtain a small part of the field's product. They were also aimed at trying to influence the principal adviser's decision when the time came for Molefatsi to apply for a further field.

By the 1977/8 season 'MaToebea had established a social tie with an influential ploughing contractor from a nearby village and she no longer had to hire someone to work her small field. It was reported that she had become the man's nyatsi (lover). Her harvest that year was worth about R40.

In addition to her concern with working the fields 'MaToebea also grew vegetables in her own backyard and on her plots in the village communal vegetable garden of which she was chairperson. She sold a portion of these crops as well as the odd knitted garment, and she participated in a relatively wealthy savings-club/setkofele. It was rumoured that she received further income as gifts from other li-nyatsi one of whom was said to be the local store manager.

It was probably for this reason and also because she was always dressed well - Molefatsi sent her clothing worth R275 during 1976 - that some villagers slandered her saying that she cared little for her field and was concerned only with remaining pretty and keeping out of the hot sun. But she was clearly concerned to establish a secure base for her household in the community, as was her husband; and the household was acknowledged as an example to be followed by other young married couples.

##### 5. Turning to the Land - Preparing to Retire

Seven village households which were directly dependent on their own head's wage-earnings had begun to consolidate their rural base and to prepare for the head's retirement from wage-labour. All were headed by wage-labouring men whose ages ranged from 40 to 56 years (mean: 46,0 years). Their wives' ages ranged from 32 to 45 years (mean: 39,0 years).

Five of these seven household heads were wage-labourers in South Africa, three on the gold mines, one in the building industry on the Reef and one in a Natal sawmill. The other two were roadgangers in the Qacha's Nek district and both were quite frequently at home in the villages.

Six households comprised extended families of various types including remitting wage-earners and active agriculturalists from only one generation. Only one household consisted of an elementary family, while another was occupied by a man whose wife had deserted him not long before and whose children he left in the care of his own deserted sister. In only one of these households was there a wage-earner other than the household head, and that was his younger brother, a miner. Three of these seven households held one field each while the other four each had two fields, although some were very small land fragments (lirapana). Stockholdings ranged from nil to 15 stock units, and three households owned ploughs, two in need of repair. One household owned

both a mechanical planter and a draught cultivator as well as its broken plough.

We have seen that draught cattle and/or labour may be used to gain membership of a ploughing-company. As a household comes closer to the time when its head will retire from wage labour its members concern themselves with becoming at least junior partners in such companies. We have seen also that the dividing line between an unequal and a balanced co-operative arrangement (i.e. ho kena lehafing and re a thusana respectively) may not be very clear. Moreover, when a man who is approaching retirement enters a company as a junior lehafing partner the object is frequently to establish a relationship which can form the basis of a more balanced arrangement later. Let us examine the case of one man's strategies in this regard. Case 6.4 below explicates the process of preparation for retirement, considering especially the attempts made to gain equal membership of a ploughing-company.

Case 6.4 Peter, a 40 year old miner, hoped to retire soon from his employment as an oscillating labour migrant. By 1978 his first son had begun in employment on the mines in South Africa and Peter felt that this signalled the stage at which he himself could begin considering retiring. Peter's household held usufruct over two arable fields both of which were regularly ploughed, mechanically planted and cultivated by the ploughing-company in which he was a junior partner. For some years his household had contributed labour to that company -- either his own or/and that of his son -- and, as we saw above, he had recently purchased three cows which he intended introducing into the draught team. The core of the company comprised a balanced co-operative arrangement between the households of two previously retired men each of whom had a relatively large herd of cattle and who had assisted each other for many years.

Peter contributed labour and latterly cattle to this company, not only to have his own fields worked, but also to become a partner of equal status in the company. That he was gaining such status is reflected in the fact that he and his wife as also one of the senior partners to the company were a little unsure whether to refer to his relationship as one of lehafing or of thusana, although the former term prevailed. His status was further enhanced when one of the two core members found it necessary to come out

of retirement and to become a wage-labourer again in order to support his family (see Case 6.5 below). His absence gave Peter a chance to make his own presence less dispensable.

Peter's deceased father had operated a small cafe which his mother had taken over. But, as the first son of the family, Peter regarded the cafe as his own property. During his extended visits home from migrant labour he made efforts to ensure that his claim to the enterprise would be upheld,<sup>30</sup> for he regarded it as a further source of income and security which would allow him to retire from wage-labour. And he also had occasional employment as an extra messenger - on a piece-work basis - for the nearby Local Court. But Peter planned still to return to the mines a couple more times and simultaneously to consolidate his rural resources before finally retiring.

Sometimes a household head's efforts to create and consolidate a rural resource base may appear relatively successful and yet prove inadequate. This is especially notable when the household head attempts to retire prematurely, when his household's needs are still growing and he cannot yet rely on remittances from a second generation member to help provide a source of income. Case 6.5 which follows relates the difficulties which follow such premature retirement; and the solution found reflects, yet again, the extreme dependence of rural Lesotho communities on wage-labour in South Africa.

Case 6.5 Louis was 51 years old and headed a household comprising his wife and five teenage and young adult daughters. He had no sons. None of his daughters was yet married and there were thus not yet any bridewealth receipts which the household might use to supplement its income. The homestead included two fields, which were worked by a company in which Louis was an equal (senior) partner, eight cattle and thirty small stock now put out across the Senqu.

Louis had previously been a storeman at the Transkei-based head-office of a store-chain which had branches in the local district. He had retired in 1974. By that stage he was a long-standing equal partner of the ploughing company in which he and a somewhat older man pooled their implements and draught stock to their mutual benefit. The company included junior partners also, and they assisted with ploughing and planting operations. Louis also had a secondary arrangement whereby he used the company team and implements to work yet another household's fields on a share-cropping (seahlolo) basis. This brought in some extra grain for the household's consumption.

After his retirement, Louis attempted to earn additional local income through doing occasional piece-work jobs on house-building etc. His wife also earned locally by sewing clothing and by selling produce from their vegetable garden. By late 1976, it was clear that the household's income was quite insufficient from these sources. The daughters wished to continue with their education - the oldest was training to become a teacher - and already the second daughter was being kept away from school for lack of school fees.<sup>31</sup>

Aged 51 years, an age when most men are planning their retirement permanently, Louis was forced to enlist for work on the gold mines, in order to provide for his family's needs. During the 13 month period that he was away at work until late 1977 he earned over R1 200, more than half of which his wife said he was remitting in monthly instalments. After a short stay at home over the Christmas and New Year holidays he was re-recruited for a further contract period of mine labour.

We have seen in Chapter V that the households of relatively 'diligent' and more successful wage-labourers suffer a degree of neglect in that the wage-earning member is never at home for long enough to effect dependable local social relationships. This has repercussions too in the ease with which such households gain access to arable allotments. But with the domestic development of a household, local resources like fields and co-operative relationships gain added importance and householders who have been neglectful may attempt to recoup lost ground by holding prestige events like large feasts which give them local status. They may also put effort into improving and extending the homestead's assets like purchasing further livestock, by building more houses and by acquiring conspicuous consumer articles which most households cannot afford. But access to arable land may yet be problematic; and in some cases, like that below, arable agriculture is treated with disdain, especially - as in this case - if the household's allotment is small and quite infertile.

Case 6.6 Kheso was a relatively highly paid underground labourer with over twenty years of successful experience. (He proudly displayed a photograph of his receipt of a long service award on the mine where he worked.) He earned well above the average of miners from the community - in February

1977 he was earning a basic wage of nearly R160 per month - and he supplemented his formal earnings by 'informal sector' activities in the mine compound (among other things, he repaired watches.). Kheso was accustomed to remitting relatively large sums to his wife at home and saving, with a commercial bank, the money he did not send home: He showed me a savings-account book with a savings-deposit of over R2 000 deposited at his workplace. He also showed me postal- and telegraphic-order counterfoils for sums totalling R2 100 which he had remitted during a twenty month period at work in 1975/6. On his return from work late in 1976 Kheso retrieved R1 000 in deferred pay from the recruiting office in Qacha's Nek.

Kheso has, over the years, managed to visit home only infrequently, albeit quite regularly. On his visits home he always brought with him an assortment of items which have helped to increase the household's local status. The homestead displayed a selection of these ranging from a smart transistor radio to a variety of furniture, a new sewing-machine and a wide assortment of clothing. When I visited the homestead soon after his return in December 1976 he proudly showed off all the contents of six parcels he had addressed to himself before returning home from the mine where he worked.

During his visit home over the summer of 1976/7, Kheso's household called a large feast, with two head of cattle slaughtered. The plentitude at the feast was much remarked upon for some time after and Kheso was admired for his ability to combine wealth with humility.

But Kheso's homestead had only one small field (serapana). Kheso claimed to value land for the security it offered, but his long absences had made attempts to gain usufruct over more land rather difficult. And, for the moment anyway, he regarded his family's present efforts as essentially futile though they did forestall deprivation of the field. His own comments are instructive. "If a man has a field but is unhealthy and cannot work, then he'll be able to live on the food which is grown on that field. (And if he is still able to work) he'll still need that field so that if he tires of working, or has to leave off for some other reason, then he'll still be able to live. But that serapana of ours is gravel and sand. It is useless. Yet they plough it while I am away ... They imitate others who are ploughing ... Although they know that the serapana will not yield anything they still plough because they fear to be called lazy by other people ... so there are many people who still live on me because their fields don't yield anything ..."

Kheso, however, was exceptional in that his earnings were reliably high. Others who earn more average wages may also remit regularly, but they cannot save much. They are concerned to provide not only the family's sustenance but also to gain access to fields and to consolidate their hold over them. This may



entail entering some form of co-operative agreement in order to work them, or it may mean having to hire someone to turn the fields. In some cases this is a purely nominal action - to forestall deprivation. In other cases householders may attempt to maximize their rural resources immediately and they subsidize them heavily with remittances. Most have thus to depend on their wage-earnings to provide their sustenance. But all try to consolidate their positions in the community to provide a base for their own futures.

In ending this section I now look briefly at a household which used its fields regularly in the hope of obtaining a yield to supplement remittances. The amounts remitted indicate the futility of this, even when yields are good.

Case 6.7 41 year old Paki was employed in the construction industry on the Reef where he earned just under R100 per month. His rural household comprised his wife and his two children while two of his father's sisters - both widows - also claimed residence in his homestead. But they were both domestics in South Africa and they supported themselves. Both visited the homestead only occasionally.

During 1976 Paki remitted regular amounts both for his family's sustenance needs and to ensure that the household's two fields were properly worked. In total he remitted nearly R300 during that year. He also sent or brought home clothing for his wife and children valued at about R100, and on his return home he had with him R200 which he gave to his wife for the next year's upkeep. He also planned to purchase some livestock with this money.

Paki's regular monthly remittances ranged from R10, sent just before his return home, to R60, sent in time for the ploughing season in September. With this money his wife was able to hire a local contractor to plough their fields, to plant them mechanically and to supply and spread manure. For these services she paid R26. The crop that season was destroyed by cutworm and they received no return on their outlay. In the previous season, however, their yield had been worth slightly more than the amount spent on hiring the plough team while the season before had reportedly produced a bumper crop and they had obtained a good return on their investment. In all the yield was nonetheless insufficient to provide more than a few months' sustenance and remittances were always needed to purchase food.

## 6. The Zenith - Using the Land and Relying on Wages

Thus far I have discussed households which depend directly on wage-earnings, and, if they hold land, make arrangements to have it turned primarily in order to retain their access to it. We now turn our attention to the kind of household which is able to attempt to use its fields more productively while still depending quite heavily on remittances. There were twenty-one such households in the community. Ten of these were headed by men, whose ages ranged from 46 to 74 years. Six of these men were retired from wage-labour and could thus concern themselves with local production, especially agriculture, while they depended simultaneously on remittances sent by younger household members to underwrite their activities. These households represent the type which has reached an optimal point in its domestic development and is best able to combine the two primary resources of wages and rural production.

Eleven of these twenty-one households were headed by widowed or deserted women whose ages ranged from 49 to 82 years. They also depended on younger wage-earners in addition to their fields, and they too had reached the highest point in their domestic development. But, without a resident adult male to concern himself with local agriculture, such households cannot hope to reach the optimal level achieved by those with a retired resident adult male.

Household composition of these twenty-one households was quite varied but, in all cases, there were at least two adult generations. Composition ranged between a household comprising a widow and four children, the two older of whom were unmarried wage-earning sons; another comprising an old couple, their children and their son's wife all of whom were supported by the two

wage-earning sons; and a third in which the older male head, three of his sons and a sister's son were wage-labourers remitting to the head's wife and mother, his son's wife and his married daughter's two children at home.

Seven of these households each held one field, eight held two fields and a further six held three fields each. Six of the eleven households with no livestock held just one field, but herds ranged in size up to 29 stock units.

Households like these which depend on the earnings of the younger generation to provide support for older members experience a certain amount of internal conflict, primarily over the use to which remittances are put. The optimal situation which they may have reached is threatened by the ongoing domestic developmental process. Older agriculturalists become too old to work the land and, more importantly, younger wage-earners begin to hold back part of their earnings in order to start building their own independent homesteads. This is most marked when the agricultural contribution to the household's income is insignificant and where the younger members' concern to create a locus for later security is neglected in order to provide sustenance for the older generation.

Despite these differences of interest within such households they are at the domestic developmental phase where the two primary resources can best be combined. Thus the older retired men can effectively practise agriculture, herding and local crafts (house-building etc.) while relying on their sons' remittances to see them through bad times. In Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng it was the households of older men who had themselves been reasonably successful in converting their wages into local resources - both material and social - which were able to participate

relatively profitably in local agricultural and craft production. Those which were less successful in balancing local production with remittances included households headed by previously unsuccessful converters of wages into local resources<sup>32</sup> and households headed by widowed or deserted women - although the households of widows who had been left with relatively well provided homesteads were able to participate quite effectively in local agriculture.

The most successful of these households are thus those which are able to use their remittances to increase their local productivity rather than for sustenance purposes only.

Case 6.8 65 year old Seqhobo had previously been a relatively well paid worker at the nearby store. Being employed close to home he had been able to involve himself in community affairs. By 1976/7 his household had three fields and one of the largest herds in Lithabeng (29,0 stock units). Some of this stock was put out with the chieftainess' principal adviser. The household owned a plough, a mechanical planter and all the other accessories needed for successful agriculture; and Seqhobo also had the tools needed for stone-masonry, thatching etc.

Over the years Seqhobo had established a variety of ploughing arrangements. The most important of these was the company in which he and Louis, whom we met above (Case 6.5), were equal (senior) partners. Seqhobo also had a few share-cropping arrangements for which he used the company team and from which his household received grain to augment his own fields' crops. The company with Louis regularly included junior (lehafing) members who joined temporarily every year. Seqhobo would have liked the company to have been hired to plough also. But the ploughing team's draught power was already fully extended, especially as he knew that the ploughing season always fell during a period of minimal grazing: "Sometimes the cattle are very thin, so I don't want to overwork them or they might die in the fields." Furthermore he realized that the company had insufficient time, with its present resources, to work any extra fields successfully: "I have a partnership with other people including those who are in my lehafing and work with me. So there is no time to plough for money."

Seqhobo was also a proficient stone mason, house-builder and roof thatcher, and he worked - on a hired piece-work basis - for those households beginning to build their homesteads. He thus benefited indirectly from remittances others sent home. In addition his newly married son, Molefi, regularly sent home money for the household's use. It was from this cash income that he purchased fertilizer, to spread onto his three fields, and maintained his agricultural implements.

But although Seqhobo did earn cash locally and although his agricultural yields were relatively large, the household had yet to rely on Molefi's remittances to supplement its sustenance requirements. As Seqhobo's wife pointed out: "We live by means of our son who has gone there, far away, to work in the Republic." But they took pains to conserve Molefi's resources. Seqhobo had built a rectangular iron-roofed stone house, on his homestead site, for Molefi; and he had conscientiously transferred some of both the remittances he received and the money he earned locally as instalments for Molefi's bridewealth. A balance had thus been achieved: Seqhobo was able both to offer Molefi something at home in return for his remittances and to demonstrate to his son his concern for Molefi's own security.

A number of these households rely rather more heavily on remittances as their only subsistence resource, despite having an older male resident who might attempt to be productive locally. Many people say they want children so that they will be provided with support after retirement; and they rely on the principle that children ought to support their ageing parents. But young wage-earners, as we have seen, offer such support in situations where their own longer-term interests are served. The 'help' given may be in the form of gifts from members of one household to those of another.

Once a young wage-earner is married he and his wife regard his remittances as the means for their own nuclear family's growth and for the creation of a base for their own future security. If, as occurs in some cases, older householders treat remittances from younger wage-earners as a sustenance resource, conflict may arise resulting, eventually, in the segmentation of the household with the younger nuclear family setting out on its own (see Case 6.9 below). Such a situation may arise where the retired generation had been unable, in the past, to convert its wage-earnings into local productive assets. The case which follows provides an example of a household in which this occurred.

Case 6.9 During the years that he had been employed Tlali had made little provision at home for his own later security. He had managed to retain a small field, previously his father's, but the household had no livestock other than one beast recently bought by Tlali's oldest married son. Two of Tlali's four sons had been born in South Africa and they both hoped to be able to remain there permanently. Neither remitted any money and Tlali had to rely on intermittently given sums from his two older sons' remittances and food prepared by his daughter-in-law. But the oldest married son was already preparing to establish his own homestead and the amounts he gave his father were increasingly small. Moreover Tlali's explicit expectation that he should be able to live off his sons' earnings, and his lack of effort in ensuring that his small field was properly worked, were points of further contention. This became clear when Tlali's daughter-in-law complained that she was no longer prepared to provide for Tlali's local status by offering food and drink to all his visitors to the homestead. Instead, she said, her husband's remittances were meant for his own elementary family's sustenance and his own homestead's development. Tlali's requirements, she argued, should have come from his own resources like his field. In the long run, however, Tlali was in a position to rely on some support from that son, especially if he offered, in exchange, that his field be re-allocated to the son's household.

The older generation members of this type of household are not always necessarily retired from wage-labour. In cases where inadequate provision has been made for retirement or where previously built up resources have become depleted, an older man may remain in, or return to wage-labour. Where this occurs employment relatively near home is preferred so that the household's fields can be cared for during weekends home from work and so that continuing co-operative relationships can be maintained. In such cases the older generation's contribution to the wage income of the household may forestall any conflict over the use to which a younger wage-earner's remittances are put.

Households headed by widowed or deserted women and including a younger wage-earner are almost inevitably disadvantaged in their ability to utilize their younger generation's remittances - if these are significant - for agriculture. This is primarily because of the lack of a resident adult male. But

women are more adept than men at utilizing the secondary resource of local petty trading, especially the brewing and selling of beer, to provide a supplement for sustenance requirements. As relict wives, most women are used to keeping some sort of balance between a husband's remittances and such petty trade income; and as older widows they may be able to do the same with their sons' remittances. If remittances are not forthcoming, however, these women may themselves turn to wage-labour or to a disguised form of prostitution (bonyatsi - see Chapter VIII).

Again the most successful of these households are those which are relatively well provided with local resources - i.e. those in which a deceased husband had remitted sufficient for the adequate building of the homestead, and in which long-standing local co-operative relations had been established. Such households are able to show their younger wage-earners a return for their remittances.

Case 6.10 'MaSeboholi, a 64 year old widow, headed a well provided household with two fields, fourteen stock units and a plough. One of her married sons and his wife resided in the homestead and some of his remittances were used to improve and further build the homestead, although a large proportion went on the purchase of foodstuffs and clothing. To encourage her son's interest, 'MaSeboholi had begun to refer to the homestead as her son's.

The household had a hired herder to take care of its livestock. This old man was also included, as a labour component, in the household's contribution to a reliably permanent ploughing-company in which it was the senior partner. It also provided its plough and most of the draught cattle. The junior partner provided the rest of the cattle and further labour which was available through the junior partner having himself taken his own junior partners to assist him. Thus while he was in 'MaSeboholi's 'armpit' he had others in his own 'armpit'. The company thus worked 'MaSeboholi's and her junior partner's fields first, turning the more junior partner's fields thereafter.

Through this arrangement 'MaSeboholi was assured that her household's fields were worked regularly and she used some of her son's remittances to purchase fertilizer and improve the output. But, like Seghobo's household discussed above (Case 6.9), her household had still to depend quite heavily on her son's remittances to provide its sustenance and the underpinning for local production.

Rather less successful are households headed by widowed or deserted women whose husbands failed to provide for the future. Very often they are the households of wives left behind by absconders (machepha). Despite having fields they may be unable to utilize them especially if they cannot depend on regular remittances from their sons. In some cases they themselves then turn to wage-labour, crossing the border into South Africa illegally and taking up employment wherever it can be found. This, however, is a last resort which most women try hard to avoid, preferring rather to live off gifts from their lovers and to brew and sell beer locally in order to provide for the household's basic needs. I return to these 'informal' types of income-generating activities in Chapter VIII. First, however, I consider the use of local resources once a household has reached a phase in which remittances are no longer available.





A wealthy contractor watches his  
ploughing team at work.



A group of young women  
weeding at a work-party

## VII LANDHOLDING WAGE-LESS HOUSEHOLDS

At the end of the previous chapter I discussed households with both wage-earning and agriculturally active members. I suggested that they had reached a domestic developmental zenith in that they were most easily able to subsidize their agriculture with remittances. I now turn to look at households which have access to arable land but which do not receive any remittances and do not include a wage-earning member: They hold land and they may be able to participate in agriculture, but they lack direct access to remittances to underpin their agriculture.

Many of these households have passed beyond their respective developmental zeniths and are now in decline. They are the households of older men, or their widowed wives, which have lost their younger wage-earning members to new independent households. There are others which have by-passed the 'modal' zenith situation through demographic accident which has prevented their ever including both wage-earning and agriculturally active members. Some, in fact, can still hope to achieve that situation: These are households headed by prematurely retired men who, because of ill-health, are unable to continue in wage-labour and whose children have not yet begun to earn.

There were seventeen such households in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng. All held land, but seven had only one field each. Herd sizes also showed quite large differences in local resource holdings. Close on two thirds of these households held one or fewer livestock units, while the other third had more than five units each. Eight households had no livestock at all while two held herds of fifteen livestock units.

The more fortunate of these households are those which have previously been relatively well provided for and which now have draught cattle, implements and labour and may be able to contract to work others' fields on a hired or share-cropping basis. In addition they provide services like those associated with house-building which brings them some cash income, and their women supplement this income by selling home-brewed beer. They may occasionally also sell an animal from their herds and, infrequently, they are able to sell a small part of their arable harvest - normally beans. But they must still purchase other staple food-stuffs before their next harvests are brought in. Some of these households may also be caretakers of put-out (mafisa) livestock which other households are unable to care for themselves. These provide additional draught-power which can be included in a contracting draught-team. They may also provide an added source of income through the sale of wool and mohair. A number of these households are also recipients of occasional gifts in cash from younger wage-earning kin. Most frequently these are gifts from sons who hope soon to gain usufruct to their parents' fields through the process of re-allocation.

The less fortunate of these households are those which lack any resources other than their fields and possibly enfeebled agricultural labour. Without livestock or implements they are forced to find others to work their fields. This may be done in exchange for their labour as junior (lehafing) partners. In some cases they may be forced to leave their land unturned. These households do not receive any direct remittances and they must try to rely on some kind of social relationship to help them to have their fields worked, for their small yields may be crucial. The demeaning role of junior partner may be all that

is open to them. Some do manage to arrange that relatives work their fields for them without direct recompense, but this is not common; and attempts to brew beer for sale are less profitable than for those who can afford the initial outlay needed. I discuss the more fortunate households first.

# 1. Continued Involvement in Agriculture - Retirement Without Regular Remittances I

Seven of the landholding households in the community which could not expect to receive remittances were still quite actively involved in agriculture. All were headed by middle-aged and older persons - two by widows in their 50s and five by men ranging in age from 52 to 75 years (mean: 64,2 years). Household composition ranged from two households each occupied by one older adult alone to others which included an old couple with or without child members of their extended families. One old man had taken a young fourth (consecutive) wife. His unemployed adult daughter also resided in his homestead with some small children.

Table 7.1 Land, livestock and ploughs held by seven landholding wage-less households

No. of fields held	No. of H/holds	No. of livestock units held; (P) = plough	
1	2	5,2	9,4 (P)
2	2	Nil	5,0
3	2	11,2 (P)	15,0
5	1	15,0 (P)	

As Table 7.1 shows, all but one of these seven households held five or more livestock units and five had usufruct over two

or more fields. Only one household had no livestock, although it did have two fields. Three households owned ploughs but none had any other agricultural draught implements besides yokes and chains. Each of these households' cattle or labour was involved in the working of its own as well as others' fields through some or other arrangement. I have discussed these arrangements in some detail above. Here I present some case studies which demonstrate the strategies used by these more successful retired landholders' households to provide for their subsistence needs. Let us start with a case which shows how a relatively well provided for widow managed her resources and saw them slowly begin to be used up.

Case 7.1 'MaLiqoapi, a 58 year old widow, lived alone in her homestead. She held one relatively large and productive field and, in 1976/7, had six cattle, three horses and two small stock. All of these animals were put out (mafisa) with her HyB in a nearby village. He also stored and used her plough. 'MaLiqoapi expected an average year's harvest from her field to provide her staple food needs for six months from June to December. To ensure that the field was worked she had an arrangement with her HyB which she described as re a thusana (we help each other; see Chapter VI). He held her mafisa stock and her plough and, in exchange, worked her field for her with the team he used for his own and others' fields. He, in turn, took a number of junior (lehafing) partners with whom he ploughed; and he managed regularly to be hired by others to turn their fields also.

In most years 'MaLiqoapi's HyB ploughed her field twice, planted it mechanically and later cultivated it for her. His draught team comprised both his and her cattle and both provided some implements. Late in the 1975/6 season the HyB fell ill and 'MaLiqoapi helped to weed his fields by calling a work-party on his behalf. The following ploughing season saw 'MaLiqoapi's HyB ploughing her field for her as usual. But the planting was postponed because of a lack of rain at the crucial planting time, and when the rains did finally come the HyB was unable to fulfil his commitment for lack of time and labour. 'MaLiqoapi was thus obliged to make some other arrangement, especially as she had no seed because her previous year's harvest had been rather poor. This she did by taking up another widow's offer of both seed and her sons' labour to plant mechanically but using 'MaLiqoapi's HyB's draught team and planter. In exchange, 'MaLiqoapi had to pledge a half-share of her crop which amounted to a total of 2 bags of beans.

After the previous year's rather poor harvest 'MaLiqoapi had been obliged to sell some of her livestock to provide for her sustenance needs and to allow her to

continue brewing beer for sale. Her estimated gross takings from beer sales in 1976 amounted to nearly R100, of which about R5 had been paid as a commission to the owner of the roadside beerhouse from which she made her sales during the less busy months of the year. In December, when many migrants were at home, 'MaLiqaopi sold her beer from her own homestead.

Despite 'MaLiqaopi's efforts, her resources were clearly being run down. Her beer sales provided some income, and her crops gave her some foodstuffs. But she had still to supplement these by purchasing food and clothing and for this she was being forced, slowly, to sell off her livestock. This was reducing her worth to her HyB as a ploughing partner and he was thus able to default on his commitments to her, leaving her to have to make alternative arrangements which were a further drain on her resources.

Where a household of this type is headed by a man, the success with which local resources are utilized may be somewhat greater than in the female-headed households. Even if the man is himself unable to participate in ploughing activities, as in Case 7.2 below, he may still be able to make co-operative arrangements which would not be so likely for a woman. Case 7.2 demonstrates also how a prematurely retired breadwinner can earn some income locally and manage his household's affairs after having to return home ill.

Case 7.2 Lefu was an industrial worker in Natal until some six years earlier. At age 46 years he had returned home suffering from tuberculosis. At that stage he had not expected to have so soon to retire from work but he had nevertheless been both saving money and building his homestead consistently and he did not return home destitute. He was thus able to continue building the homestead further. As late as five years after his return home he was allocated a third field; and all along he took pains to consolidate his network of reciprocal relations. He was the caretaker of mafisa livestock from two other households and he was an equal partner in a three-cornered ploughing-company with those households. The company came together only for ploughing, however, and each member had respectively to contract elsewhere to have its fields planted mechanically - Lefu hired a man with a planter to do this for him. Lefu also employed a young herdboy to tend his livestock and a part of the payment was to use the company ploughing team to turn the field belonging to the herdboy's parents.

Lefu earned intermittently by fashioning stone building blocks and from the sale of eggs, poultry and milk. His wife brewed beer for sale and they occasionally received small cash gifts from his brothers. After I began my fieldwork, Lefu's ZS (illegitimate) was recruited for the first time to work on the gold mines and he began to

remit to Lefu's household of which he was a member. This provided a more regular source of cash income and an opportunity to expand the household's participation in agriculture in order to reach for the zenith. But this was undermined by Lefu's persistent illness: "My ZS sent R70 to us. This was used for feeding the family and for sending me to the doctor as I am very sick. I am suffering from tuberculosis." The household's potential to reach a zenith was then again undermined by Lefu's death. But his wife managed to convince the mafisa stock owners to leave their animals in her care; and, at least for the season following Lefu's death, the ploughing-company continued to operate as before, though it seemed likely to collapse in the relatively near future.

Older retired men also attempt to earn some income locally, and this is especially important if they cannot rely on the remittances of a wage-earning household member. There is a real need for a cash income to underwrite a household's agriculture and if there are no remittances available then some other way may be found to earn cash. This may be through any one, or a combination, of the sale of livestock previously accumulated, being hired to work others' land, providing other local services like craft production, selling home-brewed beer, and other similar activities. And some households may yet be able intermittently to rely directly on some form of wage-labour earnings, as Case 7.3 shows. Case 7.4, thereafter, demonstrates how previously earned investments in local resources may be used to support a household in decline.

Case 7.3 Tumello was 74 years old and the caretaker of a number of mafisa small stock whose fleece he had the right to sell. He ploughed his own fields, those of his mafisa stock owners and a few which he was hired to work. He also received small gifts from junior members of his extended family, to one of whose households he had 'hired' out a part of his own field (see Case 5.1 above). In addition he provided a pack-animal service in the vicinity, especially to the nearby Sengu ferry, for which he used his donkeys. This, he said, provided his primary source of income. He claimed to be hired frequently to transport travellers' baggage from the bus-stop on the main road down to the ferry-crossing. For this he was paid in cash. In other instances he was paid in kind as, for example, by some food-aid workers who gave him part of their earnings in return for his

services in transporting their bags of hard-earned meal.<sup>33</sup> His three fields were consistently relatively productive. But the income from these sources was still not adequate for the household's needs - especially clothing - and Tumello's young fourth (consecutive) wife occasionally slipped across the border into Natal to find employment there and thus to supplement their cash income.

Case 7.4 75 year old Moliko headed a household with five fields<sup>34</sup> and 15 stock units, including ten head of cattle. All the fields were worked regularly and produced relatively large yields.

Annual yields from Moliko's five fields

(1 Bag = 6 tins = ±80 kg. grain)

<u>Season</u>	<u>Maize</u>	<u>Sorghum</u>	<u>Beans</u>
1975/6	7 Bags	4 Bags	1½ Bags
1976/7	1½ tins	5 Bags	Nil
1977/8	3 Bags	4 Bags	Nil

In 1975/6 Moliko sold some of his harvest of beans and, in that season, the harvest was adequate to provide most of the staple food required by Moliko's household which comprised only himself, his old wife and his young BS, a child who lived with them and was the household's herdboys. But in other years the household had still to purchase some of its staple foods as well as other necessities.

Until quite recently Moliko had been able to continue as a wage-earner near home. This was after his retirement from migratory wage-labour. It was only in 1970 that he finally lost his job on the local road gang. Since then the household has had to depend wholly on its own material resources. Moliko has, at times, had to sell an animal from the herd that he had built up in his wage-earning days: "I had then taken out that money which I'd earned and bought cattle with it; so now it is those cattle which give me milk." In so doing Moliko was having to reduce his household's milk supply - a small amount of which he was able to sell locally - and eating into the household's most prized resource, the herd. Without a wage-earner to provide a regular supplement to its local income the household's slow decline seemed inevitable.

## 2. Declining Ability to Use the Land - Retirement Without

### Regular Remittances II

Ten of the community's households continued to hold land while no longer being able to rely on any remittances and having very limited local resources. Moreover they were unable to work their own fields without substantial outside help in some



form. This was because their local resources were insufficient to provide reliable access to a ploughing team. Some were the households of widows who had no remittances coming in from a son. In the past their husbands had been able to arrange that their fields were worked. But since the husband's death these households lacked the labour needed to become, or remain, even junior (lehafing) partners in ploughing companies. Case 7.5 demonstrates such a decline.

Case 7.5 'MaNyane's husband died during 1976, not long before I first arrived in the field. She now lived alone in a homestead which included one field and a single beast as well as some pigs and poultry. Not long previously the household's other beast had died.

In past years 'MaNyane's husband had been a lehafing partner of a local ploughing contractor. He had provided both his two cattle and his increasingly infirm labour to a ploughing team in exchange for assistance with ploughing and mechanically planting his own field. But after his death this arrangement began to falter. In the 1976/7 season 'MaNyane still said that she had 'entered the armpit' of her husband's earlier partner - but in addition to providing her one beast for draught in his team she also had to pay him R1,50 in order to have the field worked in the usual way. Soon after that 'MaNyane slaughtered the animal and held a feast in honour of her departed husband. By the following season (1977/8) she could thus no longer provide an input to the draught team and she was forced to hire her husband's old ploughing partner to work her field - she paid him R10. All that remained of the earlier relationship was the partner's willingness to be contracted by 'MaNyane on a hired basis.

Other households of this type included those which had slipped out of the 'modal' domestic developmental phase. Whereas they ought to have been relying on a wage-earner's remittances, they could not do so because of that person's ill health. And their inability to prepare for such an eventuality undermined their attempts to produce agriculturally, although a few were able to become temporary junior (lehafing) partners in ploughing companies. Some did still receive occasional small cash gifts from wage-earners in other households - from sons, brothers and occasionally neighbours. But these were few and far between

and most of these households struggled to survive by participating in work-parties, by helping out (if they could) in others' fields and by brewing beer for sale. Brewing and selling beer cannot provide an adequate source of income, however, if it is not subsidized by other cash earnings - unless it is on a very large scale which none of these households could hope to achieve. Another small source of income is through the sale of fruit. A few homestead sites have one or two fruit trees on them. When the fruit on these ripens what is not taken by passing children may be transported to Qacha's Nek and sold there to passers-by. This work may be done by women, of these disadvantaged households, who receive a small payment in kind for their services. These women may also be asked to assist with weeding or harvesting other households' fields in return for a payment in kind at the time of harvest. And some may also take lovers (linyatsi) who help to support them and their households (see Chapter VIII).

Eight of the ten households which are dealt with in this section were headed by older persons - three by men aged between 64 and 71 years (mean: 68,7 years) and five by women aged between 68 and 76 years (mean: 63,4 years). The other two household heads were a sick 38 year old man and a 35 year old widow who did not yet have a wage-earning son who could remit. Household composition ranged from two households each occupied by an old widow on her own, to households with two generations of adults as well as children. In one of these cases an old retired man lived with his wife and married son who was ill and thus unable to continue in wage-labour employment. One of these households was occupied by two widows of the chieftainess' HFoB. He had never had any children despite his taking three wives. His first wife had taken a further wife after his death, but she too

remained childless.<sup>35</sup> The two surviving widows had both died before my return visit to the community.

Five of the households had only one field, four had two fields and one had usufruct over three fields. Seven of them held no livestock at all while the other three had only one beast or a couple of small stock each. Their local resources were thus significantly smaller than those of the households I discussed in the previous section.

The fields held by these ten less successful households were often left unworked because of a dearth of resources to employ a hired contractor to turn them and because they were not sufficiently fertile to attract a share-cropping partner. The one notable exception was the rather better arable land of the two childless widows of the chieftainess' HFoB who shared a homestead. Their fields were worked by extended kin who had hopes of gaining rights of usufruct over them once the old widows died. Moreover, theirs were the only fields in the community which were weeded and harvested by work-parties drafted by the chieftainess in terms of the defunct provision that chief's had the right to call for tribute labour to work their fields (cf. Sheddick: 1954: 150-2; see Chapter IX below). The helpers received no recompense for their efforts. Not even the chieftainess' own fields were worked by this kind of labour. It is interesting also that one of my informants categorically described this type of labour call-up as 'not a letsema (work-party)', suggesting that that term can be used only to describe work-parties which are voluntary and at which food and drink are provided for the participants. Sheddick (ibid) has used this term to describe only tributary work-parties for the chief. He does not provide a

vernacular term for what he calls 'friendly working parties' (ibid: 86). Ashton (1952: 131) refers to both forms of work-party as matsena (plural).

Other households' fields were worked by their mafisa stock caretakers or by arrangements in which they were temporarily able to become labour-supplying junior ploughing partners. Both Cases 7.6 and 7.7 demonstrate the insecurity of such arrangements.

Case 7.6 After some years of being employed on the mines, 38 year old Tlala had fallen ill and had had to return home. For four years he remained at home, unable to return to wage employment. Then, during 1977, he managed to enlist again for work on the gold mines. But within months he was again repatriated. As another informant said: "... he came back from work (as) he is mad, and has been sent home by his boss."

Tlala's homestead included no livestock. But it did include one small field (serapana) which he had been allocated some years earlier when he was still employed. In order to work that field Tlala had, every year, to make some arrangement whereby he could obtain the use of a draught team and plough. Being unemployed, he could not afford to hire a draught team so his only avenue was through contributing his own household's labour to a ploughing-company in which he became a junior (lehafing) partner. In the 1975/6 season he did this with a contractor from a neighbouring village and, in exchange, his own field was turned. During the following two seasons his son's labour was also included and they assisted with both ploughing (twice) and mechanically planting the three fields of one of the senior partners in a local ploughing-company. In exchange they were given the opportunity to plough Tlala's field, but only once, after broadcasting seed over it. And even this was regarded as a favour to Tlala as the other company members felt they could easily have managed without his labour.

Tlala hoped soon to be able to begin depending on his son who was nearing the age at which he could enlist for mine labour. This would have helped the household to recover its developmental momentum, at least for a time. But soon after Tlala's return from his abortive attempt to be re-employed his wife deserted him, and took their three children along with her. Because Tlala had been unable to earn properly, he had been unable to complete, or even continue with, his bridewealth payments. He could therefore not claim paternity and he was unable to prevent the loss of his children's earning ability (cf. Murray: 1976a and b; 1977).

Tlala also attempted to gain access to another source of income. His deceased father had owned a beerhouse in Qacha's Nek which Tlala's oldest brother, a tuberculous, had inherited and was now running quite profitably. Tlala

claimed that a share of the enterprise was his, an idea his brother hotly disputed with a resulting assault and court case which Tlala lost. (See Case 9.4).

By the time I returned to the field, Tlala was living alone, a pariah in the community. By that stage his only apparent source of sustenance was an occasional handout from one or another benefactor in the villages.

Not all such cases turn out quite so unfortunately. Some men, having had to leave off work because of illness, are able to re-establish their wage-earning ability after a time and they can thus continue to support their respective households. In a number of cases men who are unable to earn for themselves are never able to establish their own homesteads and they remain residents of their respective parents' homesteads. Alternatively, a young man's efforts to establish his own independent homestead may have to be delayed if he is unable to earn adequately to pay off his bridewealth -- or a significant portion of it -- and to start building a house. Tlou, in Case 7.7 below, is one such man who, in addition, was to have been the sole remitter to his retired father's household.

Case 7.7 Tlou, the 24 year old first son of a retired immigrant to Ha Makhaola, lived in his father's homestead with his new wife and infant child. Tlou had first been recruited for mine labour when he was not quite 18 years old. After one contract on a gold mine he had found employment, first in industry and then in agriculture, in Natal. But by the time he was 22 years old he had begun suffering from a severe dermatitis which resulted in his being repatriated. He enlisted again for the gold mines but was again returned home. He remained at home for about a year, taking up odd piece-work jobs with the local road gang. Again he enlisted -- this time for the coal mines -- and again he was turned back. He then reverted to his occasional local employment.

During 1976/7, when I was first in the villages, this was his situation. Its effect was to undermine the viability of his father's household which he had been expected to support and for which his father had been unable to provide adequately in the past. During that season their one small field (serapana) was left unworked: "because we have no seed, nor cattle or a plough; and there is no one to help me with a plough." The household's women did, however, manage to earn a bag of maize by assisting with weeding and harvesting others' fields. By the time of my return to the field late in 1978 Tlou had begun earning again, and remitting, and the household's fortunes were a little

improved. Tlou had managed to find regular employment in another part of the district. This was in construction work associated with the building of the new road link between Qacha's Nek and Maseru. Moreover, Tlou's younger brother was planning soon to enlist for mine labour and he too could soon be expected to remit money for the support of their father's household.

Let us now turn to one more case-study. This demonstrates the dangers of retiring without providing adequately for the future. Subsisting on one's children's remittances may not always be terribly secure. We have seen earlier that, in time, sons and their wives come to regard their earnings as a resource which cannot be shared with parents unless there is some incentive, such as the promise of re-allocation of fields. In occasional instances, as for example Case 7.8 below, the wage-earning son may die. This has repercussions for both the young man's wife and family and - if they were dependent on his remittances - for his parents' household.

Case 7.8 71 year old Mpatang had retired many years earlier from wage-labour employment without having created a reliable home-base first. He had hoped, however, to depend on his two sons' earnings to ensure that his household's fields could be used productively, and he re-allocated parts of his land to them. But at the time of fieldwork his older son was unable to support even his own household properly and his younger son had recently died while away at work. (see Case 6.2). The compensation which his daughter-in-law received was of some help<sup>36</sup> and she assisted in purchasing some of Mpatang's household's food requirements. But Mpatang was still obliged to remain a junior (lehafing) partner in a local company to ensure that his own and his daughter-in-law's fields were worked.

The household also earned some small amounts through the sale of beer brewed by Mpatang's wife and daughter-in-law and through Mpatang's occasional employment for house-building. In addition the household received small payments in kind for the weeding and harvesting services which both Mpatang's wife and his daughter-in-law provided for others in the villages. For a short while the widowed daughter-in-law was employed in Natal after slipping across the border,<sup>37</sup> but after the receipt of her compensation she returned home and was able to brew more regularly. She also found herself a lover who gave her quite regular gifts. And she fell pregnant.

All the adult members of the household regularly

attended work-parties, feasts and beerdrinks in the community and Mpatang was unfailingly present whenever an animal was to be slaughtered and when those who attended and assisted were fed the internal organs. This provided an essential part of Mpatang's diet - as did the beer he cadged in local beerhouses from those wage-earners who could afford to purchase it.

The households I have considered in this chapter are all relatively insecure because they lack a regular source of remittances. But, as we have seen, some are still in a position to depend on their local resources which they have built up over the years of their dependence on wage-earnings. Others, however, have reached a phase of domestic decline where their local resources have become so depleted that they are of little value in providing the household's means of survival. The chapter which follows examines households which, being landless and having no source of remittances, are even more uncertain of their security.

# VIII LANDLESS WAGE-LESS HOUSEHOLDS

In this chapter I consider those households which, on first viewing, appear to have reached a phase of even greater decline than the households discussed in Chapter VII. These are households which have neither land and stock nor a regular source of remittances. All are woman-headed and small and they are marginal both in the local context and in the context of the wider industrial economy.<sup>38</sup> They do not, however, represent a further phase in domestic decline. They are households which for various reasons have not followed what I referred to earlier as the 'modal' cycle of domestic development.

There were five such households in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng. They were headed by widowed or deserted women whose mean age was 49,8 years (range: 43-63 years). Four of these women were immigrants to the community who had removed without an accompanying adult male. In each case the move was precipitated by the death of the respective woman's husband, or his having absconded permanently. In two cases the woman was a second wife for whom her husband had not paid adequate bridewealth to legitimate the marriage and who was subsequently rejected by the husband's children of his first marriage. The fifth woman was the first of two legitimately married wives of a now deceased clerk. Before his death they had been legally divorced and she had established her own homestead apart from that of her own children who remained with their father, his mother and his second wife.

The composition of these five households ranged from two households in each of which the woman lived alone to one household which included the head, her three younger children and the illegitimate child of a daughter. None of these households



included any co-lateral relatives or unrelated members. None had any workable arable land although one woman claimed that she had long previously been allocated a small stony allotment (sera-pana) (see Case 8.3). None of them owned any livestock other than a few poultry and, in one case, pigs. These provided an occasional source of meat, both for sale and for that household's own consumption. They were insignificant however, as generators of regular income.

All five of these households were unsure of their sources of income which were quite irregular. For the most part they managed to eke out their sustenance needs from a variety of small-scale (informal sector-type) trading activities. They brewed small amounts of beer for sale and participated in small lito-kofele; they received gifts from their lovers (linyatsi) and they also received small payments in kind for assisting other households with the arduous tasks of weeding and harvesting their fields. Another source of income is through participation in local food-for-work (food-aid) projects. Some of these women, with some luck, managed to find menial employment either in the towns of Lesotho or by slipping across the border and being illegally employed in South Africa, or alternatively entering the so-called informal sector there. But the lack of security which this holds out motivates their attempts to establish homesteads in roadside villages like Ha Makhaola where they can continue to rely on the passing trade while simultaneously involving themselves peripherally in others' agricultural efforts.

Case 8.1 'MaLisebo was a 43 year old mother of four daughters all of whom were attending school. Her husband, whose second (consecutive) wife she had been, had died some ten years earlier and his children by his first wife had then evicted her and her daughters from the homestead and

deprived her of access to her husband's fields. This was possible because only two cattle had been paid for her bridewealth and the marriage was not regarded as 'proper' or 'complete'.<sup>39</sup> She then left her children with various relatives and crossed the border to find employment as an (illegal) domestic: "When I reached Durban I met with many difficulties because my papers were not correct. But I finally found a lekhoca (White person) who gave me a job in the kitchen; and I stayed in the backyard. They told me I could stay and work only if I did not go out and did not receive visitors or boy friends there because, they said, I'd be arrested otherwise. I could not even talk to the woman who worked next door."

After falling ill, 'MaLisebo left that job and settled for a while in a Black township in Natal where she was self-employed as a seamstress. During this time she returned intermittently to Lesotho, applied for a homestead site near that of her brother who had settled earlier in Ha Ma-khaola, and built a small rondavel. And then during my initial fieldwork period she decided to remain in Ha Makhaola and to set up locally as a dressmaker while also brewing beer for sale. Moreover, she established a number of relationships with local men and received gifts from them. These helped provide an income for the household. But this was insufficient and for a while, after I left the field, she had a job as an office cleaner in Qacha's Nek. This fell through, however, when those responsible for employing her found the 'favours' of another woman more attractive: "They expelled me and replaced me with someone whom they liked much more." By the time of my return to the field she was again having to depend on local trading and on assisting other households in their fields; and she complained that she was quite unable to support the household let alone keep up with her daughters' school fees.

Local employment, like 'MaLisebo's job in Qacha's Nek, is not easily found. The road-building project which was introduced after my first period of fieldwork improved this situation a little locally. Interestingly, I was told that many of the available jobs had been opened to widows or deserted women only. But the work is arduous and only a few women have been placed; and as one of these women said: "These other women say they do not want to work on the road using picks and shovels. That, they say, is a man's work which women ought not to do." Nevertheless, by accepting this regular form of wage-labour some women were able to begin extricating themselves and their households from their plight.

Case 8.2 47 year old 'MaSebata was attempting to do this. During my earlier period of fieldwork she managed to eke out a living primarily by brewing beer which she sold from her one small house alongside the main road-junction. She also participated in a setokofele/savings-club through which she received a gross income of between R20 and R25 every second month; and she received various unspecified gifts from her linyatsi. I was paying her a small regular sum for doing odd laundry. In addition she assisted with weeding and harvesting others' fields. In the 1976/7 season she received 2 bags of sorghum and 1 tin of maize. On this income she maintained her small household which included her three teenage schoolgoing children.

By my return to the community 'MaSebata was earning R58 per month on a job in road-building. This often took her away from the village but she continued to brew and sell beer from her homestead when she was at home. She had also branched out into reselling bottled liquor. Moreover the influx of locally employed wage-earners allowed her to increase her income in gifts from linyatsi.<sup>40</sup> Her son had also started in wage-labour around that time; between them, they had saved sufficient to build a second house on the homestead site. They were now also talking of starting to build a herd by purchasing a cow for which they expected to have to pay between R100 and R180. Moreover, 'MaSebata hoped that in the not too distant future her son would marry and then be in a position to be allocated a field, so that the household could become more like others in the village.

Some of these marginal households may thus be able to extricate themselves from their disadvantaged situations. This is possible only as long as the younger generation earners remain in the household and do not establish independent homesteads. It may even allow such a household to enter a developmental cycle more closely approximating the 'modal' cycle once the sons begin to earn and remit a wage and the daughters are married and their bridewealth becomes an added resource for the household.

But others of these marginal households are so severely disadvantaged that such an avenue for development is closed. They are households headed by older women whose sons have already abandoned them and who are dependent on whatever they can find locally to eke out a livelihood. Their mere existence is precarious and they have little or nothing available to invest in order to improve it.

Case 8.3 Probably the most destitute of these households was that of 62 year old Agnes who lived alone in her home-  
stead. Many years earlier she had removed to Ha Makhaola  
after her husband had absconded. She had no children and  
no kin ties in the community, but had settled there in the  
hope of being able to brew and to sell beer to passers by.  
She had also been allocated a small field (serapana) which  
nobody else cared for because of its stony and infertile  
nature. But even the chieftainess regarded her as having  
no land. Agnes sustained herself by assisting others on  
their fields, by working for a time as a food-aid labourer  
and by occasionally working locally as a domestic - washing  
clothes, carrying water, cooking - for staff of the nearby  
Local Court if they needed her. Occasionally too she was  
hired to help care for confined nursing mothers who could  
not rely on extended kin for assistance. But her previously  
important source of income - gifts from lovers - was no  
longer available as she was now too old to be attractive.  
And her failing health deprived her of her continued ability  
to rely on piece-work employment for payment in kind. By  
the time I returned to the field she had died.

Three of the various sources through which households of  
this marginal type obtain an income deserve special mention and  
consideration. They are (i) the payments in kind, and occasion-  
ally in cash, which are received for assisting with weeding and  
harvesting others' fields; (ii) the revenue derived from savings-  
club/setokofale activities and the sale of home-brewed beer,  
and (iii) the gifts which women receive from their illicit lovers  
(linyatsi). None of these is limited to this type of household,  
and members of the various household-types considered earlier may  
- as we have seen - also utilize them in order to gain income.  
Especially in the case of savings-clubs and beer sales, households  
with another income source may, in fact, be able to generate fur-  
ther income more successfully than those which must depend on  
these informal resources only. For marginal households, however,  
such sources of income are crucial.

The provision of labour for weeding and harvesting, in re-  
turn for payment in kind, can be viewed as a form of wage-labour,  
albeit on a piece-work basis. Murray (1976a: 125-9: Table 3.5)  
has suggested that the (female) labour-intensive nature of weeding

and harvesting corresponds with a high degree of long term commitment between co-operating partners in these activities, and that this is reflected in the high rate of reciprocal help used to perform these tasks. But he says also (ibid: 106) that assistance in these tasks is commonly rewarded by direct payment: 20c per day for weeding, varying amounts in kind for harvesting.<sup>41</sup>

In Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng, of the 92 fields ploughed during the 1976/7 season, 87 were weeded and only 63 harvested. The rest either suffered crop loss or were reaped piece-meal through the season for green maize. The majority of these fields were both weeded (67 fields) and harvested (54 fields) by family labour although these figures include the few fields worked by share-cropping partners and by explicit reciprocal assistance. But as Turner has pointed out, "It would be most unusual for the women (of a household) not to be accompanied on at least some of their weeding days by friends or relatives from other households." (Turner: 1978: 251). A form of reciprocity thus exists through which the tedium of weeding and harvesting is overcome by friends, neighbours and kinswomen helping one another with these chores in their various fields in turn.

Such reciprocal arrangements are often for the purely social reason of women keeping one another company in the fields; yet they often reflect a degree of long term commitment which may be reinforced by the moral aspect of a kin link between co-operating partners. As Murray (1976a: 121-4) has pointed out, however, we must look beyond only kinship links to discover why particular partners co-operate. Following this lead, Turner (1978: 261) has said that "if for some reason they are not friendly, women who are related to each other are unlikely to work together in weeding (and harvesting) their respective fields."

A significant minority of these operations are performed by hired labour where the long-term (moral) commitment may be negligible (ibid). It is with these arrangements in particular that I am concerned here. During the 1976/7 and 1977/8 seasons respectively 18 and 12 fields in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng were weeded, and 20 and 18 fields were harvested, by hired labour. Amounts paid ranged from one, two or three tins of maize after the harvest to R3 paid immediately for weeding, and from a basin to a bag of maize or sorghum to R5 for harvesting. In the majority of cases the amounts were paid in kind rather than in cash. They were also relatively small. This reflects the two facts that many of the women who make themselves available for such work are old and destitute and relatively unproductive (ibid: p. 251) and that gross yields are themselves rather small.

Ashton (1952: 130-1) recorded the existence of this form of wage-labour over forty years ago. In Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng it was a preferred means whereby landless women gain a portion of their sustenance needs. As one older man said:

The Sesotho way of working is such that a woman who has no field ought to join in and help those who do plough. She will help with weeding and with harvesting so that at the time of reaping she will receive a part of the yield. Then (if she has a husband who is earning) she will be able to save the husband's money. But these days most young women have no wish to hoe ... although those who find they've received no money sometimes do get down to the work.

Many of the younger women who can rely on remittances from their husbands do shy away from the tedium of working in others' fields for a minimal reward. But, as we have seen in Chapter VI, others solicit such work in order to demonstrate their eligibility to be allocated fields. And older destitute women, like those who head landless wage-less households, may depend on selling their labour thus in order to help sustain their households.

As I have pointed out earlier, and as Murray has repeatedly made clear (1976a; 1978; forthcoming), agricultural production depends on the investment of remittances earned in migratory wage-labour. In an indirect way these women, earning locally by being hired to weed and harvest others' fields, are thus drawing an income off those remittances.

Brewing beer for sale and savings-club/setokofele participation are further ways in which these households attempt to obtain an income. A part of the household's income may be invested in the ingredients for home-brewed beer which, when made up, can be sold at a small profit. It was difficult to ascertain precise figures of amounts spent on ingredients and income obtained from the sale of beer. Most women take the ingredients from their household food supplies and many spend part of the income before having sold all of their beer. In 1976/7, some women estimated that they could earn between R1.50 and R2 by selling a tin ( $\pm$ 20 litres) of beer for which the ingredients cost between 90 and 95 cents if purchased in small quantities. Larger-scale brewing operations which purchased ingredients in bulk were able to bring the costs down to about 75 cents a tin which - if sold on a purely commercial basis - were said to provide a return of up to R2.50. But such operations had also to include costs of labour, and, in some cases, rent for accommodation. In the one case for which I have some figures this put the costs up to about R1.20 per tin brewed. As I have noted above, however, investment on such a scale is not possible for the disadvantaged women who head landless wage-less households. For them a hand to mouth existence, with occasional amounts set aside to brew beer for sale, is more the rule.

Savings-clubs provide a way for women to ensure that,

occasionally but regularly, they have enough cash available to brew quantities of beer for sale. And where these are associated with setokofele arrangements, as they are in most cases, the women also receive a certain amount of labour assistance in preparing beer and other foodstuffs for sale.

A savings-club comprises a group of people - in most cases between three and five women only some of whom can necessarily expect a regular remittance from an absent wage-earner. It operates as follows. At the end of a fixed period of time (e.g. weekly or monthly) one of the group receives agreed upon amounts of cash from each of the others. Each member, in turn, has a chance to be the recipient. She can expect to receive from each other member the same amount that she gave (will give) that other member when the latter's chance came (comes) up. A cycle (or round) is completed when all the members have had a chance to be recipients.

A setokofele (or stockfel, pl. = litokofele, from the English 'stock fair') is a party or bazaar, held at someone's homestead, at which money is taken for the food, drink and sometimes entertainment provided. It is sometimes referred to as a tekelaene by the people of Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng (teke from tiekie (Afrikaans) = the old threepenny coin, threepence; laene = English, line). Paroz (1961) has translated setokofele as "mutual entertainment club, bazaar or banquet organised by such club." This reflects the common association of these bazaars with savings-clubs and an obligation of members to assist one another in preparing their respective parties using the money received from the savings-club. But sometimes litokofele are arranged by women who are not members of savings-clubs. They



do, however, depend on their friends and neighbours to assist with preparing the food and beer for the bazaar. We can thus distinguish between these two elements - the savings-club and the mutual-aid bazaar - although Brandel-Syrier (1971: 307: n. 37) says that a stockfel generally includes both. She also suggests that such arrangements are "based on strict reciprocity ... (which is) the most binding code of tribal life" (ibid).<sup>42</sup>

Where a setokofele is associated with a savings-club the members both provide the cash base for preparing the party and help the 'owner' of the setokofele with the preparations. They are also expected to spend minimum amounts at the bazaar. The proceeds of a setokofele go to the 'owner' i.e. the woman who has received payment from each of the other savings-club members and has invested her money in a setokofele. She retains the profits made. These include the money spent at the party by her savings-club partners as well as whatever money outside visitors spend. Gross takings at the litokofele for which I have records (during 1977) ranged from around R15 to over R50. The larger figures, as expected, were obtained by litokofele held by wives of remitting wage-earners who could afford to spend relatively large amounts on participating in savings-clubs and on holding large parties. The smaller figures, were those obtained by li-tokofele held by more marginal women like the heads of landless wage-less households. Savings-clubs do draw their members from similar sorts of households so that, for example, wives of regular remitters may co-operate with one another. But they are by no means exclusive, and four middle-aged neighbours - two with wage-earning husbands, one with land but no remitter and one without either resource - may come together to co-operate.

Another avenue through which these women derive an income

is through relationships of concubinage (bonyatsi). For the disadvantaged households which are the subject of this chapter, this is a most important source of income. It is not, however limited to them. On the contrary, the phenomenon is quite universal, although for these marginal households it may be the underpinning for their other income earning activities.

Relationships of bonyatsi may be established between any married persons or between one married and another unmarried person. Some are relatively permanent, while others are quite transient. The term is used to refer to relationships ranging from one in which a couple is living together but where no bridewealth has been paid to brief liaisons with passers-by, as long as these are neither too frequent nor involve any direct and explicit transaction. In that event the relationship is one of botekatsé (prostitution).

Real prostitution, known as botekatsé, bohure or bochuchutha, is said in the villages to occur only "in the towns - there at the place called khomo li a oela (lit. = the cattle are falling down) not out here in the villages."<sup>43</sup> This was despite references to one of the cafes in Ha Makhaola as khomo li a oela. The manner in which matekatsé (prostitutes; sing. = letekatsé) operate was described to me thus by an old deserted wife in the community:

Hell! Listen now! When such a woman comes to you she says 'Hey, boy! I want you here.' So you eagerly trot behind her. And then, when you arrive there (at her place) she takes your money and all your possessions. She deprives you of everything that you have with you, your jerseys, your money and all the items she fancies, until finally you are left to go about with just your underpants ...

On another occasion, an older man referred to the problems encountered by returning migrants when they reached the local towns and met up with prostitutes there:

Some of these men coming from Makhooeng (the place of the Whites) eat up all (their money) right there (in town) and finish it off. The prostitutes use it all and even take their blankets. So some men turn about right there, and return to join up again without even reaching home.<sup>44</sup>

In earlier chapters I have referred to relationships in the two villages which appear to be a form of prostitution. But most villagers, if confronted, would refer to these by using the term bonyatsi which does not imply the same degree of disapproval as does botekatse, as is evidenced by the following statement from another of my informants.

A letekatse (prostitute) is an unattached woman who loves (anyone, anywhere), who is independent and rules herself, who today is married by this one and tomorrow by another, and so on; a woman who seduces other women's husbands: That is a letekatse! But bonyatsi is when a woman loves the husband of another; she makes him into her nyatsi even though she still has a husband of her own: She is his (her lover's) nyatsi - for she has a secret affair with that man (her lover) who is her nyatsi.

The dividing line is, however, quite blurred depending, among other things, on the proximity of the speaker to any particular such relationship. It is unlikely that a woman in the local community would be referred to as a letekatse, unless she had left the community and was known to be selling herself (ho ithekisa) in one of the local towns. Relationships of this nature in the community are most commonly referred to as bonyatsi.

Bonyatsi is nevertheless almost always associated with the transfer of gifts. People are understandably reticent about disclosing details of the amounts which comprise these gifts just as they are evasive about their wage-earnings and the sums which they remit. But a few women confided that they expected amounts of the order of R10 per month:

My nyatsi must give me soap so that I will be clean when he comes to me; and he must give me something extra also. You see, when a woman is married then her husband must take out cattle which he gives to her father (i.e. bridewealth). Now when a man takes me as his nyatsi he must still pay,

but this must be our secret ... he can even give me R10 per month.<sup>45</sup>

Most men - especially those who are wage-labourers - have at least one nyatsi each. This means that a proportion of their earnings is distributed to their linyatsi in transactions which are not only illicit but have to remain strictly secret. In doing this a man deprives his own household of access to a portion of his earnings while illicitly supporting another - an action which can only retard accumulation by his not investing fully in his own household's growth. Of course, it may be argued that while A is giving gifts to his nyatsi, B's wife, B might be doing the same for A's wife (or a more complex network may prevail, but with a similar effect). But this does not necessarily allow for investment in homestead building because men guard closely their right to build their own respective homesteads without interference or outside 'help'. In a few cases, where the man is unable himself to support his wife and a family, he may turn a blind eye to his wife's infidelity. But, in most cases a man will not tolerate another interfering in the running and building of his household. This is evidenced by the often reported destruction of blankets and clothing which a returning migrant finds in his home and which, he believes, his remittances were insufficient to have paid for:

That husband came home and burned all those clothes and blankets because, he said, he did not know who had been the person to buy them for his wife;

And, in another informant's report:

Today Phahlo sent his wife back home to her parents. I have heard that very early in the morning he took his wife's clothes and blankets and burnt them. After that he told her to return to her parents' home or else he would slit her throat.

For widows and deserted women, however, bonyatsi gifts may provide the means not only for providing sustenance requirements but also for building up a homestead, or at least improving the facilities on the homestead site. One of my informants told me confidentially, but quite explicitly, that she planned to "sell myself so that I can build another house ... when that has been completed I shall begin to sell myself again in order to buy utensils for the house. That is my work, you understand." With the income thus obtained these women are able to buy ingredients for beer, to participate in savings-clubs and to provide their basic needs.

## IX SALARY-DEPENDENT AND TRADING HOUSEHOLDS

Let us now turn our attention to two interconnected categories of households which together form a nascent petty bourgeoisie - that is an incipient class fraction partly distinct from the other types of household discussed so far. These households derive a cash income from salaried employment in bureaucratic positions or from the earnings of cafes/beerhouses or other petty trading activities. These are commonly combined with local agricultural production while some of these households also include wage-earning members. Their primary relationship with capital is through 'non-productive' salary earning or through independent petty trading. In Poulantzas' (1973) terms they represent a petty bourgeoisie - 'new' (salaried or bureaucratic) and 'traditional' (entrepreneurial) respectively. The distinction between productive wage-labour and non-productive salaried-labour is rather blurred. I limit the meaning of non-productive here to include only salaried employment in clerical or other 'white-collar' positions.

These salary-dependent and trading households are somewhat set apart from other rural households, although all members of a rural community share a common set of values. Some of them derive a certain amount of status from their occupation of positions in the community which are associated with an earlier form of authority - the chieftainship. Today such authority has been modified and it persists in emasculated form. It is vested in its holders from above - that is from their appointment by the national administration - but it continues to draw meaning from the past (cf. Perry: 1977). Contemporary chiefs and their counsellors are thus a part of the national bureaucracy, and they

reinforce their links with the modern sector of that bureaucracy by ensuring that their children are better educated than others so that they can find prestigious clerical positions in Lesotho relatively easily. This goes also for those involved in successful petty trading, some of whom have themselves come from the modern bureaucracy.

The only two university students from Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng were the sons, respectively, of a clerk and a nursing sister and of a cafe owner whose deceased husband had himself been a teacher and a graduate; and the chieftainess' principal adviser had ensured that all but one of his sons were trained teachers (see Case 9.2). This demonstrates the links between the different levels of this class fraction in Lesotho.

In a local village context, the status which households hold is commonly reflected in their greater access to local political influence. By appealing to both their modern and their 'traditional' links with authority they are able to maintain their position of local dominance in the rural community and to use it to their own, and their family's, advantage. Thus the households of chiefs, headmen and chief's counsellors (advisers) are able to hold onto relatively large tracts of land and to gain usufruct over arable fields for their own kin and immediate descendants relatively easily.

Lesotho's land tenure system, as we have seen, prevents the accumulation of excessively large landholdings (at others' expense). With another system of land tenure, these households might be able to extend their direct control and usufruct over local arable land. They would then become a kulak-type of stratum while simultaneously participating in the national bureaucracy and in 'success-story' trading. Some tractor owners in the

lowlands appear to have done something of this sort through share-cropping arrangements. This suggests that the process of class formation which has been discussed for other areas in Africa (e.g. see Raikes: 1978; Cliffe: 1977; 1978) is beginning to occur in Lesotho too. For the moment, however, most such households stand poised to use the opportunities which a change in the land tenure system might bring,<sup>46</sup> and they remain an incipient petty bourgeois class fraction.

There were fourteen households of this type in Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng. I consider them here under two headings. Firstly I discuss households which depend primarily on a salary income. This category is not homogeneous, however, and we can once again see the utility of taking account of the developmental phase reached by particular households when examining them. I then consider those households which depend heavily on an income from relatively successful small-scale trading. This is, however, often associated with continuing inputs from remitted wage-earnings.

#### 1. Salary-Dependent Households

There were ten households in the community which depended on a salary (or stipend) to provide the primary part of their income. Six of these households were headed by clerks and teachers; another was headed by a retired clerk on pension and three more were headed by people holding local administrative positions: They were the chieftainess, her principal adviser and her scribe, each of whom received a monthly stipend from the central government which they managed to supplement with gifts or 'tribute'. All but one of these household heads were employed in Lesotho, the exception being a clerk on a South African gold mine.

Eight of the ten household heads were men. Their ages



ranged from 32 to 68 years (mean: 50,4 years) and that of their wives (one man had two wives) from 25 to 66 years (mean: 43,6 years). The two woman-heads were a 53 year old widowed teacher and the 58 year old chieftainess, also a widow. Two of these ten households consisted of nuclear families and another comprised a nuclear family with the head's younger unmarried brother also resident. All three nuclear families were headed by men under 40 years of age while the other five male heads were all over 50 years old. They all headed somewhat larger households including two or three adult generations i.e. the head and his immediate descendants and their wives. In one household there was also a resident hired herder. The composition of the chieftainess' household was exceptional: She was childless and had taken into her house her HyBS and his wife and child, as well as a minor HyBS.

Every one of these ten households included a salary- (or wage-) earner besides the household head, and some households included three earners. In all there were fifteen wage-earners who were not household heads in these ten households. Nine were men, seven being employed in South Africa (four on the gold mines) and the other three in clerical or teaching positions in Lesotho. Of the six women, five were also employed in Lesotho. Two were nurses, two were teachers and the fifth was a cleaner in Qacha's Nek. One woman was with her husband in Natal where she earned in the 'informal sector'.

All but two of these households held two or three arable fields. The two exceptions were those of a widow with just one field and a young teacher who expected very soon to be allocated land. Six households held two fields and two held three fields. Stock holdings were rather larger than those of most

in the community and all of these households held some livestock. Herds ranged in size between two and over thirty-three livestock units (mean: 10,5; median: 9,3 units). The two smallest herds, of two and three units respectively, consisted of only cattle. In the second case these were specially purchased milk cows.

These salary-dependent households can be differentiated in terms of their domestic development. Households of young teachers or clerks bear certain resemblances to those of younger wage earners insofar as they too are still attempting to build and consolidate their homesteads. Similarly, the households of village administrators may be very much like households at their developmental zenith for they have both a regular and reliable cash income and the ability both to ensure the working of their own fields and to be contracted to work those of other households. But the local influence which these households command - either directly or through kin links - allows the homestead building process to proceed more rapidly. The potential for inter-generational conflict, in households at the zenith phase, is reduced by the older generation's earning simultaneously with practising agriculture, as well as assisting younger earners to accumulate local resources.

The fact that the children of these households are frequently better educated than others, and in salaried employment in Lesotho, reflects their strategies to ensure their families' continued occupation of high status positions. It also ensures the maintenance of links between the modern and 'traditional' sectors of the national bureaucracy. The relative wealth and prestige which the senior members of these households hold is thus passed down to their immediate descendants, and the positions

which their children attain outside the community reinforce their local status.

Case 9.1 Abednigo, whose FoBS is a well known intellectual and one-time opposition politician in Maseru, had once been a mine labourer. This was after he had run away from home and school as an adolescent. But he had later returned to school and had matriculated. Thereafter he became a clerk, first on a mine and later in a hospital near Johannesburg where he met and married a nursing sister. They subsequently returned to Lesotho, he to become an interpreter/clerk at a local Magistrate's Court and she to take up a post at a local hospital. During the 1970 Emergency<sup>47</sup> they both lost their positions although Abednigo's wife soon found another at a mission hospital. For a few years Abednigo remained at home where he involved himself in petty trading. Afterwards he returned to salary-earning as a clerk in the Qacha's Nek office of a labour recruiting agency.

Abednigo commuted weekly between Ha Makhaola and Qacha's Nek. In the village he was not very popular as he considered himself to be a cut above most of the other members of the community. Although an immigrant to Ha Makhaola - from across the Senqu - he had managed to obtain usufruct over two fields and on these he sowed barley as a fodder crop for his three specially purchased milk cows.

Abednigo's children were all being put through school at least to the matriculation level. His daughter was already training to be a nurse and his first son was a bank clerk in Maseru during my longer stay in the village. He subsequently entered the National University of Lesotho.

I now turn to a rather more extended case study in order to show how certain households can utilize their social resources - especially those derived from their intersecting statuses as 'traditional' leaders and as modern bureaucrats - to enhance both their prestige and their material well-being and security. The family described is not, however, typical in the community; and the case is not limited to just one household. It focusses on the family of the chieftainess' principal adviser and it examines the relationships between members of that family which cut across a number of household units. The case demonstrates also how, even in this distinct category of a local elite, domestic development remains important, although its effects are cushioned by links with influential local kin.

Case 9.2 Tsietsi, the principal adviser, had four sons, the three youngest of whom were trained teachers. The youngest was unmarried and was still resident in Tsietsi's homestead. Motsamai, the third son, lived for most of the year in another village where both he and his wife were teachers. His household in Lithabeng was still landless but it had five stock units which were left in Tsietsi's care. When I returned to the field the household was in the process of being granted land. Two relatively large and fertile fields had recently become available for allocation and Tsietsi, who chaired the development committee, had reportedly claimed one of them for Motsamai, despite the chieftainess' objections and her own claims to some of that land.

Mpatuoe, Tsietsi's second son, already had two fields. Mpatuoe also taught in another village where he lived with his wife for most of the year. Their fields, which Tsietsi had arranged they be allocated, were worked by Tsietsi and his ploughing team including the labour of his household's hired herder. Mpatuoe returned home when he could to assist with the work, but it was left largely in Tsietsi's hands and most of the yield went to Tsietsi's household. Thus Tsietsi, through allocating fields to his sons, was able effectively to increase his own access to arable land.

Tsietsi also utilized his sons' status as teachers both to enhance his own prestige and to motivate his allocation of land to them ahead of others. That the youngest son had been sent to study in Australia gave him more than just pride; It justified for him and for others his efforts to accumulate prestige and wealth. And it demonstrated the direct link between the 'modern' elite and the 'traditional' - for Tsietsi himself was illiterate.

Tsietsi's first son, however, was a disappointment, primarily because he was not as educated as his brothers. His job-status as a labourer could not enhance Tsietsi's own local position. On the contrary it demonstrated Tsietsi's lack of difference from other fathers in the community. Thus when the oldest son decided to resettle in another village - ostensibly because of a party-political dispute with his father - Tsietsi did not object to his removal.

Tsietsi's own homestead included three fields as well as a small 'tree' site. Only he and one cafe-owner (Case 9.4) had such allocations.<sup>48</sup> This provided him with a certain amount of cash income in addition to his monthly stipend and the cash which he received as a hired contractor working others' fields. He was also able to rely on a certain income from 'gifts of a tributary nature'. In the words of another informant: "Those who receive these bribes (tjotjo) are the chieftainess and her company (of advisers) ... The chiefs are like that. If I do not pass a bribe (ho nts'a tjotjo) I will not be granted a field."

We saw in Chapter V that the payment of bribes for fields is one of the routes along which migrants' remittances trickle into the local community. But this sort of payment is not limited to gifts to the chieftainship and development committee.

Clerks in the recruiting offices and others on the mines are all also alleged to require payments for favours. As one informant put it: "I could pay R10 and then ask for something - a field if it were a chief (I'd given money to); or an easy job if it were a mabhalana (clerk) at work ... "49

I have not found any evidence in the literature on the Basotho that tribute in kind was ever a prerogative of the chieftaincy, except insofar as the first animal killed on a hunt belonged to the chief (Ellenberger: 1969: 265-6). A senior chief could also expect his subjects to subscribe to the bridewealth for his senior wife (Sheddick: 1954: 148) and, in exceptional circumstances, a chief could levy a special tax in cattle - but not for his own gain (Ellenberger: op. cit.). There was also a system of tribute labour, but this was replaced in 1950 by a head-tax payable to the national treasury.<sup>50</sup> The tax was instituted for "reimbursing the chiefs ... for the financial loss they will sustain by being deprived of free services ... " (Sheddick: 1954: 151; cf. Ashton: 1952: 131).

Over twenty-five years ago it was said that the chiefs "have never attempted to exact personal tribute from their followers returning from work abroad" (Ashton: 1952: 208). Insofar as the payment of tribute had never been formalized this may well have been true. But as another author of that period pointed out "informal presents (to the chief) may be made from time to time in acknowledgement of some favour received or in support of some request about to be made" (Sheddick: 1954: 95). It is these same gifts, now commonly referred to as tjotjo (bribes)<sup>51</sup>, which have become the centre of public controversy.

A number of Lesotho Weekly (20.01.79), for example, carried two articles on the subject. One cites a government minister

(himself a chief) as warning chiefs not to disgrace the chieftainship by accepting bribes, and refers to related maladministration in the allocation of land.<sup>52</sup> The other article cites a senior chief who blames the public: "the people entice chiefs to accept bribes and thereafter accuse them of malpractices in the performance of their duty" (ibid).

Despite the press attacks on bribery and corruption, 'tribute' (or tjotjo) of this nature is still commonly paid in most rural communities, for it may influence the decisions taken by the chief and development committee over arable land allocations. Moreover, it reflects earlier authority relationships albeit in modified form. Even the respect (hlomphe) which is regarded as a chief's due may be understood as a form of tjotjo. This became clear when one of a company of young men complained of the preferential treatment meted out to chiefs (and religious ministers) at local feasts: "When the chief arrives at a feast, he is called in with the minister. And when he has entered (one of the houses) it is said that tjotjo has been passed." This suggests that there are growing feelings of ambivalence about the chieftainship and the authority it claims in terms of its earlier status.

Case 9.3 The chieftainess in Ha Makhaola was also able to supplement her income with what she received as tjotjo. Among other gifts, she received payments in kind from the food-aid workers who were busy digging contour furrows and working on the roads in the immediate vicinity of Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng. This gift she regarded as her due from the individuals who were thus employed, although it was not something she expected to be paid by the government official who organised the work group. The workers were on land which she understood to be 'her' land (mobu ona ke oa ka: this soil is mine). They were thus expected to pay her for the right to earn their food in her area of administration - especially if they were from villages outside that area. As she said: "They give me three bags (each containing 50 kg. of maize meal) after having completed a furrow ... I do not ask for this. The soil is mine so they must give me when they have finished digging ... I am given it by

the people who dig, not by the (government) organisers of food-aid ... I also receive one tin of cooking oil."

The chieftainess also derived some income (R30 or more per month) from the sale of timber from the large poplar plantation, alongside the village, which had been planted to prevent further soil erosion.

This plantation is on land which is under the chieftainess' administration. She was thus able to claim the right to dispose of its product. This derives from the principle that a chieftaincy has certain rights over all natural building and roofing materials - including reeds, thatching grasses and timber (liremo) - in its area of jurisdiction (cf. Ellenberger: 1969: 266; Sheddick: 1954: 116-25). These rights are associated with the chieftaincy's administrative title over maboella land resources (cf. Hamnett: 1975: 64ff.; Jingoos: 1975: 39ff.; Perry: 1977). But these are not rights of usufruct, although they have come to be treated as if they were insofar as the chiefs now sell timber instead of making it available free of charge, and for building and roofing purposes only, to members of their respective communities (cf. Sheddick: 1954: 124).

The chieftainess' administrative authority in the area around Ha Makhaola derives primarily from her appointment by the national administration. But this authority does not go so far as to allow her some of the assumed rights which she claims, or which the people of the community allow her and her administrative officers. That people are prepared to pay tjotjo, for example, demonstrates two things. Firstly, the demand for usufruct over fields is such that people accept that they have to pay for that right - and as most resources which they need today have to be purchased and paid for from cash earnings, this is not an unusual type of transaction. Secondly, the contemporary authority of the chieftaincy is reinforced by perceptions of its authority

in earlier times. This is being increasingly undermined locally although it is simultaneously being reinforced from outside. It does, therefore, still provide a strategic avenue, for households which are able to claim some kind of local authority, to gain local success.

## 2. Trading Households

Households which participate in small-scale trading can be divided into two groups: a majority for whom the income is barely sufficient to make ends meet and a minority who are able to use their trading earnings to accumulate and thus to build up their rural resources. I discussed the former group in Chapter VIII. Here I am concerned with a group of four rather more 'successful' petty traders. This type of household frequently has some land and may receive remittances from a wage-earner to supplement and possibly subsidize its petty trading. Local small-scale trading thus depends doubly on remittances - directly through monies sent home by wage-earning household members; and indirectly insofar as the sales which are made must depend on others receiving remittances which can be spent in the local cafes. The fact that wages are needed to underpin successful petty trading was reflected in one informant's statement about a local cafe owner: "Her life started to be a little better only when her sons began to go to the mines and to send her money."

Two of the four trading households in Ha Makhacla and Li-thabeng consisted of larger than average extended families and both included wage-earning members. Both were headed by widows, of 53 and 61 years of age, who ran cafe/beerhouses alongside the main road-junction in Ha Makhacla. The other two households were headed by men, 41 and 53 years old. One owned both a beerhouse



(shebeen cum hostelry) in Qacha's Nek as well as a small cafe in Ha Makhaola. The other was involved in the 'informal sector' in a Natal town where, he said, he worked as a self-employed tailor. Other (corroborated) sources suggested that he was a middleman in the dagga trade.

All four of these households held land and some livestock although, in one case, the household's fields were in another village in the district (see Case 9.5).<sup>53</sup> Two households each held three fields and the other two held one field each. The two male-headed households each had more than eight livestock units; the two female-headed households had only two and three units each.

We have seen earlier that most households go through a developmental phase during which it is hoped that agricultural and other local resources will provide sustenance once there is no longer a wage-earner in the household. Petty trading has only recently become such a resource. When I was first in the field many people regarded petty trading as a temporary source of income, similar to wage-labour, which could provide for a household during only a part of its developmental cycle, while agriculture was treated as a long-term option, providing a base for security. This attitude was epitomized by the words of the man in the 'informal sector' in Natal. He regarded 'business' as too risky to invest one's whole future security in it:

I look to ploughing as an activity which will help us, if only we work hard at it. For it is on ploughing that a Mosotho must always depend ... It is better than business which is difficult and which only Whites can take on; business beats us ... it is a difficult thing. Indeed! There is no one who has no wish to be in business, and yet see how few of us have managed to do it ... We are accustomed rather to herding and to ploughing.

The question nonetheless remains as to which people or households choose petty trading rather than wage-labour. In the case of women, for whom opportunities in wage-labour are severely limited, petty trading is, in any case, a common supplementary source of income. And, as we saw in Chapter VIII, it may be the only source of a widow's precarious livelihood. But the more successful petty traders are those who have links either with the 'traditional' authority structure - the chieftainship - or, more commonly, the modern bureaucracy. Thus Abednigo (Case 9.1), when he lost his clerical employment, turned to petty trading; and one cafe-owner in another nearby roadside village was an ex-policeman who had also lost his position at the time of the 1970 Emergency.<sup>54</sup>

Recently local interest has grown in the idea of running a cafe as an alternative means of gaining a post-retirement income. Between my two periods of fieldwork there was a noticeable shift in this direction. Thus when I returned to the field a number of people were considering establishing cafes or even small general stores because, as one man said: "These (wage-labouring) men bring much money back with them from the Republic (South Africa). These days there is much business here in Lesotho." Petty trading is thus becoming more popular as an area in which wage-earnings can be invested for later security in the same way that many households invest in agriculture and other local resources. But petty trading can never replace agriculture because retail trading must depend on at least a proportion of the population earning sufficient to make purchases. At least in theory, agriculture can be depended upon independently of outside inputs. Moreover agriculture is perceived to be the 'proper way' for Basotho and this ideal is reinforced by the

promise held out by the land tenure system that each household should have access to arable land of sufficient area to provide for its needs. Case 9.4 demonstrates how agricultural resources may be used alongside petty trading, to provide a source of local income.

Case 9.4 Letsie, a 41 year old tuberculosic, had returned home quite early in his working life. He soon took over the running of his deceased father's beerhouse in Qacha's Nek and later opened up a cafe in Ha Makhaola. The cafe was later closed during 1977. Letsie also took pains to improve and build up his agricultural resources. By 1976/7 he had been allocated three fields as well as a tree-site and his herd included eight cattle and fifteen small stock (eleven stock units). He also owned a plough, a planter, a cultivator and a scotch cart.

Letsie made sure to work his three fields regularly, using his draught team and implements and his hired herd-boy's labour. He also worked the fields of his widowed mother's household, demanding in return his younger unmarried brother's labour to help with ploughing his own fields. During the 1976/7 season he was not contracted to work any other households' fields, although the following year he was hired to plough for others.

Late in 1976 Letsie arranged an initiation lodge to which he sent his son and which was open to any others wishing to attend. As the 'owner' of the lodge he received payments from the other initiates' parents and he allegedly did not put all of these back into the activities of the lodge. He also hired out his scotch cart and draught team to households wishing to transport timber for building or large quantities of water for brewing beer. His wife, who had managed the cafe, did odd seamstress work on a sewing machine which she owned. Most of Letsie's time was, however, taken up with administering the beerhouse in Qacha's Nek where he employed women to brew, on a wage-labour basis, where rooms were available for hire and where prostitutes could reportedly be found.

We saw above that the households of village bureaucrats like the principal adviser do not limit their activities to only local administration and that they enhance their local prestige by reference also to their kin links with the modern bureaucracy. The same applies to households which are concerned primarily with local cafe-type trading. They retain an interest in the land, they retain and renew their links with the educated elite and they attempt to use whatever resources they can to enhance their

local prestige in order to ensure their security. The case which follows shows the types of links such a household may have.

Case 9.5 'MaNkhubisa, a 53 year old widow and mother of ten, owned a cafe cum beerhouse in Ha Makhaola. Her homestead occasionally functioned as a roadside hostelry and it was a recognized illicit liquor outlet, while 'MaNkhubisa, her daughters and her hired brewing assistants were allegedly also prostitutes.

'MaNkhubisa was a stalwart of one of the local churches and an active supporter of the ruling Basutoland National Party. Her husband had been a teacher and graduate when he died 25 years earlier and her father had been a government employed agricultural demonstrator and later a wealthy stock owner. One of her sons was soon enrolled at university while most of the others were employed in white collar jobs in Lesotho. For a while one of her daughters had been regularly associated with an important chief although this had never been formalized as a marriage.<sup>55</sup> Recently that daughter had been allocated a homestead site in Ha Makhaola for herself and her five illegitimate children.

Although 'MaNkhubisa's cafe and de facto home was in Ha Makhaola, her official place of residence was still her husband's natal village nearby. There she retained a homestead and access to three fields which were worked by hired contractors or, preferably, a government tractor. Thus she ensured her security of tenure while continuing to maintain herself and her household from trading activities supplemented by occasional gifts remitted by her sons.

Her position in Ha Makhaola was, however, somewhat ambivalent. She was not formally resident there and yet she was a part of the community, especially since her daughter had established a homestead there. She was much admired by many of the villagers for the way she had managed so successfully as a widow to raise a large family and to see her children through at least some years of secondary school, and she earned status by their having been employed in the Lesotho bureaucracy. But there was also much spite for the methods she had had to use to attain these goals, especially as she was from a respected family and had been married to a most prestigious man. Her local acceptability was further undermined by the implicit rejection of rural community norms by her married sons, none of whom had settled in either Ha Makhaola or their father's home village.

Traders, almost by definition, must be outsiders because the morality of community makes the impersonality of trading difficult among those with whom one has close ties. Letsie (Case 9.4) had had to suspend his village cafe operation primarily because of the demands of kin and neighbours for credit and gifts.

Other outsiders in the Ha Makhaola area were the petty bureaucrats associated with the Local Court, the road-gang, and other central government agencies. They were members of the salariat which I discussed in the last section. But as they were not jural members of the community, I did not include them there. These people are the local representatives of the national bureaucracy and they have a certain amount of status which is associated with their positions. They are thus likely to create and to maintain links with the local elite, especially those local traders who are outsiders as they are. Evidence for this was the relationship of bonyatsi (concubinage) which existed for some time between 'MaNkhubisa (Case 9.5) and a clerk who had been posted to the area. This was later to end in a dispute which came to the Local Court for arbitration. Another such functionary had entered a financial arrangement with 'MaNkhubisa whereby he undertook to underwrite her cafe by providing an extra source of capital, in exchange for a share of the profits. But his liquor account soon started growing, and he also demanded credit for the purchase of groceries from the cafe. At the same time his inputs began to tail off and 'MaNkhubisa was forced to end the relationship.

By the time I returned to the field a rather more senior official had established another cafe near the road-junction. He was a resident of a village in another district who had been posted to Qacha's Nek. He had realized that the road-improvement programme which was underway would probably increase the amount of traffic coming past Ha Makhaola and he had managed to persuade the chieftainess and development committee to allocate him a cafe site on the roadside.

Thus we see again the convergence of the two categories of

salaried and entrepreneurial petty bourgeoisie. The links between these two are clearly being utilized in strategies for further personal and family advancement. By referring to their links with the elite of the wider society, local traders enhance their prestige and social acceptability; and they renew those links by educating their children so that they too will find employment which carries prestige. But their perceptions of their continuing ultimate dependence on arable agriculture, and the lack of security for all but the few pensionable salary earners,<sup>56</sup> suggest that the dividing line between the petty bourgeoisie in Lesotho and the rest of the country's rurally resident population is still quite blurred.

## NOTES TO PART B

### Chapter V

1. She was, in fact, the jural head of the household. But she had been an absconder for many years, ever since her husband had himself absconded and left her with no local resources. She now regarded her son as the household head and his earnings provided the principle resource of the household.
2. I discuss the purchase of cattle for draught purposes in greater detail in Chapter VI.
3. cf. Ashton (1952: 181-2; 213), Sheddick (1954: 109-10), Taylor (1972: 43-4), Thompson (1975: 12; 53-5), Sanders (1975: 14); also cf. Schapera (1955: 246-8) and Parsons (1977: 114) who discuss mafisa among the Tswana.
4. I am grateful to Pat McAllister for drawing my attention to this point which is apparently far more explicitly understood by the Gcaleka (cf. McAllister: 1979).
5. Discussing the contemporary situation of the AbakwaMkhwanazi (Zulu), Erasmus (1978: 74) has said that work-parties have virtually disappeared as a form of co-operation, both for agricultural tasks and for house-building. This suggests that the breakdown of 'traditional systems' has gone even further in northern Natal than in rural Lesotho. David Webster (personal communication) confirms this and has suggested that wage-dependence in northern Natal is greater even than it is in Lesotho.
6. See inter alia Davies (n.d.), I.L.O. report (1972), Hart (1972). Also see Leys (1975) for a refutation of the usefulness of the concept for development strategists.
7. I discuss litokofele in greater detail in Chapter VIII.
8. See McAllister (1979: 134-44) who has discussed the social significance of the distribution of liquor by returning Gcaleka labour migrants. He refers specifically to the larger numbers of bottles of brandy brought home by younger migrants than by older men. He attributes this to the younger men's need to establish themselves as responsible and accepted members of the adult community (ibid: 142-3).
9. A Sotho acre is measured along the shorter side of a field only, pacing out 12 man's paces per acre irrespective of the length of the other (longer) side. See Wallman (1969: 136).
10. This appeared to apply only to households of married couples. Where a widowed or deserted woman or even an unmarried mother wanted to set up a homestead (and possibly to be granted fields) of her own the procedure seemed not always to require a male's participation. This was a point about which a number of younger men grumbled.
11. This is the only case which I came across which seemed at all like the type of share-cropping by landless wage-earners which,

Murray (1977: 25) suggests, allows for some access to land by the jurally landless. I discuss this in greater detail in Chapter VI.

12. Removal is the term used to describe the process of formal migration from one chief's area to another in Lesotho. It includes an explicit change of allegiance from the old chief to the new. Today this implies a change in one's area of registration as a taxpayer. Sheddick (1954: 169) describes a remover as "one who moves from one district within Basutoland to another part of the country, coming under new chiefs, sacrificing one set of land rights and hopeful of obtaining others." cf. Hamnett (1975: 65-6).
13. Wallman, in a recent article (1976) has suggested that since political independence in 1966 there has been a growing 'sense of advance' in Lesotho. This has contributed to an increased concern for economic independence and local industrial development, a concern which is reflected here. It is also possible that my informant's contact, in South African industry, with the growing Black consciousness and trade union movement contributed to his concern for 'Black development'.
14. Gaudeng: (lit) the place of gold: Used to refer to Johannesburg and sometimes, more generally, to the whole Witwatersrand and Orange Free State gold fields area.
15. During my longer fieldwork period the chieftainess' HyBS laid claim to this 'vacant' homestead site for his own household. The chieftainess herself had no children and, until then, his young family had been resident in her homestead. He then called a work-party to demolish the more dilapidated of the two houses on the site to make space, and to provide the stone-blocks, for building a new house for his family on the site. When I returned to the field twenty months later, no further progress had been made and the pile of rubble still lay where the old house had stood. Meanwhile the young man and his family had all moved to live in Maseru where he had reportedly been recruited as a member of the para-military Police Mobile Unit.
16. See Murray (1976a: 222ff.) where, inter alia, he discusses the use of bohali receipts for subsistence purposes: "payments in cash are quickly dissipated to meet short-term household requirements." (p. 237).
17. He suffered a compound depressed fracture of the skull and fractures of both an arm and a leg. This left him physically disabled and virtually blind in one eye. He also subsequently suffered a nervous disorder known in Sesotho as motheketheke (see Ashton: 1952: 284; 318). Motheketheke has been described as "an unaccountable sickness which often continues for months; it is accompanied by fits, fainting, loss of memory, shooting pains in the head, and may finally cause the patient to wander about the country as if in a trance or dream ... The patient may also have repeated visions or dreams of deceased friends or relatives, and is said to be visited by a spirit or to be "spiritually upset". This illness can only be cured through special ritual treatment" (Ashton: 1952: 284; cf. p. 318). The treatment, known as bokoma, has been discussed in some detail by both Ashton



(ibid: 284ff.) and Murray (1976a: 290ff.). Mothekeke appears to be very similar to what Murray (ibid) calls "moes oa balimo" (p. 290). Both these authors associate the bokoma ritual with individuals who are somehow marginal, and both emphasize that most bakoma (those who have completed the bokoma ritual) are women. Ashton (1952: 285) mentions that the only man he knew well that had experienced bokoma was a "chief's hired herdsman who occupied a very lowly position" (ibid). Lithakong had not undergone bokoma, but his suffering from mothekeke reflected his own extremely marginal position as a man without a job, without a homestead and without the prospect of providing for his family.

## Chapter VI

18. Wallman's recent article (1976) suggested that there is a growing concern - especially among nationalistically inclined Basotho since independence - to ensure increased local productivity. This has not, however, reached the grass roots level to any significant extent although it is of growing importance; nor has it contradicted her earlier assertion that "economic development will not be assured ... by an amphetamine to lift the pessimism" (1972: 260). Also cf. Poulter (1976: 27).
19. An example is the Plateau Tonga of Zambia who reportedly selected first oxen and only later cows when purchasing cattle. They apparently distinguished clearly between building up a herd and creating a draught team, the latter being regarded as a priority for a young man beginning to purchase cattle and one for which only oxen were acceptable because of their superior value as draught animals. Only once adequate oxen were held (four to eight head) did the Tonga switch to the purchase of cows in order to benefit from their increase and thus to build up the herd as well as to replenish the draught team (Colson: 1951: 27; Colson and Chona: 1965: 44-7). Tonga herds were, however, recorded as being quite large, including a few herds of several hundred head, and most men own at least up to twenty head of cattle (Colson: 1951: 17-18). In such plentiful circumstances it is possible that only some oxen are broken to the plough, with others being "kept to gladden their owner's eyes" (ibid: 27: n. 26).
20. Between 1971 and 1977 there was a trebling of the average real wage for Blacks on the gold mines (F. Wilson: 1979; Inaugural Lecture, University of Cape Town).
21. By one report a total of 47 000 head of cattle were imported into Lesotho from South Africa during 1976; and, as a result of the consequent overstocking on poor pasturage, 16 000 of these animals are said to have died. The Prime Minister is reported to have chastised the population for thus wasting well over R1m of the country's income. (Lesotho Weekly: 19.08.78).
22. This is a result of both stocktheft and administrative action taken by Transkeian authorities who occasionally confiscate Lesotho-owned stock found grazing on the Transkeian side of the border.

23. E. Bconzaier (personal communication) has estimated that, in the Richtersveld, Namaqualand, a flock of 150 small stock is the smallest viable unit to ensure a reliable, albeit meagre, livelihood without any supplement from wage-labour or some other source of income.
24. cf. Sheddick (1954: 85) who points out that, at the time of his research, the acquisition of a complete set of agricultural equipment involved considerable expense - but he does not differentiate, in that point, between implements and draught animals.
25. The word used in Sesotho for a hoe (mohoma) is the same word as is used for a plough. I suspect that Dr. Wallman missed this in her translation.
26. Kopano usually means a union or association. The term was also used to refer to South Africa after Union in 1910 and before 1961 when the country became a Republic.
27. Sol Chapole has informed me that the idea of ho kena lehaefing is also used to describe an illicit sexual relationship in which one partner who is more powerful takes the other into his/her armpit; i.e. the stronger partner accepts the other as a secret lover and thus gains greater dominance over him/her. It is noteworthy that, like the term nyatsi, this idea can be applied to members of either sex (cf. Chapter VIII).
28. cf. Sheddick (1954: 187) who says that wealthier 'professional' Basotho, who lived in the administrative centres or on missionary settlements and were landless, "frequently use their money or equipment to work land both in and outside Basutoland on the half-share system."
29. Tim Quinlan (personal communication) has referred to a case in the Leribe district where a tractor owner employing wage-labour is able to share-crop a large number of fields. Sheddick's term might well be applied to him. Again, however, it is noteworthy that tractor-draught is involved. I suspect that if a man had sufficient cattle to allow for large-scale share-cropping he would find the recruitment of sufficient labour a great problem.
30. See, inter alia, Poulter (1976: 221-258) for a discussion of inheritance and the responsibilities and rights of both heirs and dependents of the deceased, including widows; and Hamnett (1975: 48-62) for a different treatment of the subject.
31. Early in 1977 she suffered a type of nervous breakdown of a kind like motheketheke which I discussed above (see Chapter V, note 17). Having been kept away from school for lack of finances appeared to have rankled with her, especially as she had been doing quite well in secondary school and had her older sister's example to emulate.
32. Wilson (1976: 477) refers in general terms to the problem of the convertibility of wage-earnings into locally productive investments.

## Chapter VII

33. Food-aid is a system of food payment for self-help type work utilized by central government for the building and repair of mountain tracks, the digging of anti-erosion contour furrows etc. Most often the food payments are in bags of maize and wheat meal provided by the United States of America government as a 'gift' to the people of Lesotho. See inter alia Linden (1976: 147-8) who refers to this as 'food-for-work', and Lesotho (n.d.: Vol. I: pp. 113 and 123ff.; Vol II: pp. 3 and 45). There is a growing body of literature on the efficacy of food-aid as a means of providing development aid to Third World countries; see for example Stevens (1978) for a review of some of this work.
  
34. Moliko had previously had two wives simultaneously and had managed to obtain, and subsequently retain, usufruct over five fields. The second wife and her children had, however, deserted him and his first wife, who was childless.
  
35. This was a case of woman-marriage in which the widowed first wife had taken out bohali to marry a woman who might bear children for her and her house. This type of marriage seems to have been quite uncommon although Ellenberger and MacGregor (1969: 278) record its occurrence. Both Hamnett (1975: 116-36) and Poulter (1976: 166) cite the case of one such marriage which occurred in the family of the chieftaincy at Patlong, down the Senqu from Ha Makhaola. Hamnett does, however, suggest an alternative view that the widow concerned had, in fact, married a wife to her deceased infant son's grave (lebitla) i.e. ghost marriage (cf. Ellenberger and MacGregor: 1969: 277; Poulter: 1976: 163-6). It is noteworthy that the chiefs of Patlong and Ha Makhaola are of the same maximal lineage and that these two cases of woman-marriage must have occurred at around the same time. The Patlong case is of further interest in that it also contains a rather unusual modification on the sororate (seantlo) principle insofar as the chief Tautona took and cohabited with an already married younger sister of his barren first wife (see Hamnett: 1975: 117-8: Fig. 13).
  
36. This was only long after her husband's death in 1976, allegedly at the hands of members of the underground miners' team of which he was the leader. Recruiting office records showed that R250 had been paid out ex gratia plus a further R80,20 which was outstanding deferred pay. When I was first in the field, no further compensation appeared to have been paid although Mpatang claimed to have visited the mine concerned in order to ascertain the circumstances of his son's death and whether any compensation was still due. My attempts to correspond with the mine management met with a brusque rebuff. But on my return to the field in December 1978 I was informed that an amount of R3 200 had been made available for compensation payments and that the young widow was receiving R20 per month from the recruiting office through which her husband had been employed. It was not clear whether the total amount had been invested for her while her monthly sums came from the interest it generated, or whether these sums were merely eating into the total sum which would thus be depleted after a number of years.

37. This was probably in order to provide some material help for her own landless and wage-less mother who could then no longer expect bridewealth payments to provide for her own sustenance needs.

### Chapter VIII

38. My use of the term marginal is intended to convey both the common meaning of the word - i.e. on the edge or fringes - and the meaning that the process of capitalist development has created an army of structurally unemployed and unemployable personnel who have been forced onto the margins of the political economy. This second meaning is derived from the concept of marginalization as discussed by Obregon (1974) and Kuitenbrouwer (1973). I am not using the term to imply any ritual state of liminality.
39. 'MaLisebo's husband had not 'completed a head' (ho phetha hloho) (i.e. paid 10 cattle) and the union could thus be treated as illegitimate i.e. it was not a 'proper' marriage. Murray (1976b; 1977) has demonstrated how disputes over filiation - and thus the rights to a young man's remittances and a daughter's bridewealth - revolve around the amount of bridewealth paid by the genitor, but only if less than 10 cattle has been paid. It is interesting to note that in this case it was a man's children who invoked this norm to reject their father's second wife in order that she should not gain rights to his fields.
40. Many other women - both widows/deserted women and wives of absent wage-earners - also found new linyatsi among these men. As a letter sent from the village after the fieldwork period put it: "The government has sent some big graders and caterpillars to improve the road from Qacha's Nek. The men who operate these machines are staying here near Ha Makhaola, at the nearby road-workers' camp. Some have even hired rooms at 'MaNkhubisa's cafe. As I see it, all this is wonderful for the people (women) of Ha Makhaola because they can now enjoy their lives. They are now the friends of those men from Maseru. In the afternoons, when they get back from work, you can see each of the men going along with his friend: 'MaNkhubisa has one, and so have 'MaLelala, 'MaMoshoeshoe, 'MaTebello and 'MaNeo. They all have such a friend" (my correspondent's parentheses).
41. Erasmus (1978: 74) suggests that amongst the AbakwaMkhwanazi (Zulu) most labour is paid for in cash and that work-parties are no longer common. There are instances, however, of payment in kind for assistance with harvesting.
42. I eschew Brandel-Syrier's pre-occupation with a search for manifestations of earlier forms of relationship and I regard the setokofele as an institutional response to the imperatives of involvement in a capitalist economy. Sustenance must be purchased with earnings which are irregularly remitted and the savings-club and setokofele provides a means of utilizing such remittances for temporary investment and profit.
43. Each town in Lesotho has an area referred to as khomo li a oela, where prostitutes are available and where men can waste their

hard-earned money; cf. Another Blanket (1976: 8-9) which refers to areas of Maseru known as Thibella and 'the mountain'.

44. In the last few years miners on the Orange Free State goldfields have been able to spend weekend visits in the lowlands of Lesotho, in and around Maseru. For those whose homes are across and in the mountains, in districts like Qacha's Nek and Mokhotlong, reaching home during these short holidays is quite unfeasible. Instead they draw some of their compulsory deferred pay in Maseru and spend it there on 'the good life'. Also cf. Another Blanket (1976: 8-9).
45. This informant's insights into the relationship between marriage and bonyatsi suggest that a great deal of further research could be done into that relationship, and that an analysis of the changing form of Sesotho marriage over the last 150 years or so might require a close look at bonyatsi (cf. Wilson et al: 1952; Manona: 1978). Another informant suggested that bonyatsi is not a new institution and that, in the past, a commoner might have allowed a chief or wealthy man access to his wife in exchange for material benefits. Clearly this has implications regarding the concept of brideprice and the institution of marriage (e.g. cf. Gray: 1960). It also suggests that the patron-clientage of mafisa cattle relationships might have been extended to include women, although nowhere near as formally.

#### Chapter IX

46. Certain modifications of the land tenure system are proposed in the recently published (L.S.) Land Bill 1979. I have not considered the effect these may have because I have not yet been able to obtain a copy of the Bill. From the brief references to the Bill which I have seen in the Lesotho press (e.g. Lesotho Weekly 23.8.79) it seems that its impact will not be felt markedly at the village level; but this may be an erroneous impression.
47. For some of the background to the 1970 National Emergency and the subsequent events see Khaketla (1971).
48. There was only one other such allocation recorded in the local land register. This was in the name of another influential member of the development committee who was granted his site around the same time as Tsietsi. This man resided in another village in the area of the chieftainess' jurisdiction and was a well known local agricultural contractor.

Sheddick (1954: 125-6) has discussed both the private ownership of trees and the allocation of small tree sites to individuals. These are allotments of otherwise non-arable land: "Often the restricted and difficult of access piece of ground lying at the bottom of deeply incised narrow valleys and gorges" (ibid: 125). Rights to such land are similar to usufruct over arable land, and the timber growing on tree sites is the property of the allocatee, as long as he remains resident in the allocating chief's area of administration: "a man who plants trees with special permission on public land, has the sole right to those trees and their produce during his lifetime" (ibid: 126). Such rights

are not inheritable. Moreover, the land on which tree sites are situated remains a part of the public domain under the chief's administration. Unlike arable fields, they do not necessarily have to be re-allocated after a holder's death, but will more likely revert to commonage and the timber on them will become the property of the chief: "Sooner or later ... the chief will appropriate the trees as private property, partly to demonstrate that the land on which the trees stand is public land and partly to ensure that the family holding the private trees does not continue in possession for long enough for the private rights in land to become confused with the private rights to trees" (ibid).

For the most part, however, the timber which grows on such allotments may be disposed of as seen fit by the household or individual to whom such sites are allocated. It is most frequently sold either for building materials (roofing, beams) or for fuel. It thus provides a source of income for those few households which hold such allocations.

49. Although I did not follow them up during my research, I often heard allegations of bribery, nepotism and the like on the part of recruiting agency staff - especially when it came to the placing of men onto mines for which there was a local preference and thus an oversupply of labour in terms of that office's quota. Reportedly, too, there had been cases of misappropriation of remitted earnings and demands for a kick-back for assistance given in the distribution of such monies.
50. Sheddick (1954: 147-51) has described in some detail the changes which the tribute labour system underwent along with changes in the system of masimo a lira (chieftainship's fields; tribute fields; lit. = the fields of the enemy).
51. The word tjotjo is not originally of Sesotho origin. It derives from the Zulu/Nguni ukuntshatsha (to steal), and the verb ho tjotja is used as an in-law avoidance (hlonepha) substitute for the Sesotho ho utsoa (to steal) (Paroz: 1961: 532). Tjotjo thus has an immoral connotation to it. Its use to describe gifts to local authorities implies that these are not wholly normative.
52. Note that it is the individual chiefs who are attacked, not the institution of the chieftainship and the system of land allocation. In fact the individual chief is exhorted to behave in a manner befitting the chieftainship (cf. Comaroff 1975).
53. It is common to find that a cafe-owner does not operate a business in his/her own 'home' village, and that no formal removal is registered. The cafe owner thus remains registered as a taxpayer and may hold arable land in one village (the home village) while residing on a 'business site' in another.
54. His continuing interest in, and concern for, agriculture was demonstrated by the arrangement he made to gain temporary access to some arable land in the vicinity of his cafe. He was still formally domiciled in a village in the mountainous interior, and he held fields there. He was thus not entitled to fields in the village where his cafe was situated. He had, however, managed to gain temporary usufruct over a local landholder's fields in exchange for having paid the landholder's tax arrears for him.

55. I heard further references to 'MaNkhubisa herself having had a liaison with a high ranking government official now in Maseru, the capital. I was unable to obtain any corroboration on this.
56. Pensions are payable only to salaried persons who have been employed permanently for ten or more years in the Lesotho civil service and have reached 45 years of age. Non-permanent and wage-earning employees of the civil service are eligible only for lump sum gratuities on termination of their service if that has been for ten years or more. Most married women are included in this second category even though they may hold quite senior clerical posts. Ministerial exceptions may, however, be made to the rule that married women cannot be employed permanently. In December 1978 there was talk of this rule being altered so that married women could hold permanent appointments in the normal course of events. Certain other employers in Lesotho, notably para-statal bodies, have pension schemes for their employees. The South African Railways also pays out pensions to their retired workers, but the mines in South Africa do not have a pension scheme for their African labourers.

## C O N C L U S I O N

### X INCLUSION IN THE REGIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

Arable land, livestock and other local resources are not able to provide the sustenance requirements, let alone the subsistence needs, of rural populations in peripheral communities such as Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng. A small supplement to remittances may be obtained from these local resources, but the community's means of subsistence comes primarily from wage-labour earnings. The material reproduction of the community thus depends on the involvement of many of its members in wage-labour, most frequently in South Africa.

Local economic activities have the primary function of providing for the diffusion of wage-earnings. Agricultural activity, originally a form of production in its own right, has taken on an essentially distributive function. In order to work the fields, for example, cash-earnings are invested in the agricultural process, often through the hiring of others to work the land. The purchase of home-brewed beer, the payment of bribes for the allocation of fields and the practice of concubinage are some of the other activities which provide avenues for the diffusion of wage-earnings in the community. The work-party, using a disguised form of wage-labour, is another.

Recognition that the productive role of agriculture is only quite secondary and that the material reproduction of the community depends on inputs from involvement in an encompassing industrial economy leads us to ask two interrelated questions: (a) Can it be argued that the political economy of migrant labour in contemporary southern Africa is characterized by the articulation of



two modes of production - a non-capitalist mode (non-CMP) dominated by a capitalist mode of production (CMP) - or should we rather conceptualize that political economy as one mode of production? (b) What is the structural relationship between the peripheral population and the capitalist core in the region? In the two sections which follow I suggest possible answers to each of these questions.

### 1. One Mode of Production Rather than 'Two-in-Articulation'

The data which I have presented demonstrate that wage-earnings, and especially the remittances of oscillating labour migrants, form the primary subsistence (including reproductive) resource of the community in which I did research. The work of both Murray (1976a: 99-133) and Turner (1978: Chapter 2) describe a similar situation for communities in other parts of Lesotho. Without remittances, these rural communities could not reproduce themselves. Moreover, the social relationships which are the framework for the provision of social security in these communities would not be able to function without those remittances. They may be of a so-called non-capitalist nature,<sup>1</sup> but their form has been modified so that, in effect, they are disguised forms of capitalist relations. This would suggest that rural Lesotho's incorporation into the southern African capitalist economy might be understood best if the concept of a single capitalist mode of production is applied.

There are two ways in which Marx used the term Produktionsweise, which has been translated as 'mode of production'. "According to one of these it was indistinguishable from the 'labour process' (Arbeitsprozess), or what Lenin would sometimes call the 'technical process of production'." (Banaji: 1977: 4). The other meaning attributed to the term, and the meaning which Banaji

(ibid) prefers to emphasize, is that of an 'epoch of production' (Webster: 1979: 7; Banaji: 1977: 4-5).

The former meaning corresponds loosely with the meanings given the concept of mode of production by authors such as Hindess and Hirst (1975) and Terray (1975), among others. This meaning is the one understood - albeit in a variety of interpretations - by analysts of the underdevelopment process in southern Africa who follow a Laclau (1971) type of analysis conceiving the articulation of two modes of production, one (the CMP) dominant, the other dominated (Webster: 1979: 7).

From the perspective of the 'epoch of production' meaning, one may argue that any extant non- (or pre-) CMP is replaced by a dominating CMP early in a contact situation and well before the technical process of production is transformed from a pre-capitalist to a capitalist form. This replacement (or incorporation and destruction) occurs once the mode of appropriation of surplus is of a capitalist form (ibid). There are two problems with such an analysis. Firstly, it focusses on relations of distribution of surplus rather than on relations of production. This is precisely where Laclau (1971) found fault with Frank's pioneering work on underdevelopment in South America (Frank: 1969; 1971). Secondly - a problem related to the first - by understanding the immediate demise of a pre-CMP once there is contact with a CMP, the process of transformation of the pre-CMP becomes more difficult to analyse. In contexts of transition the concept of articulation of two modes of production may provide a useful, albeit a dualist tool.

Foster-Carter (1978) has most ably discussed the concept of articulation of modes of production, including the implications - for that concept - of the debate between these two perspectives

of what constitutes a mode of production. I cannot hope to add anything to that discussion here, but I raise it for two reasons. Firstly, the sort of position Banaji and others take up derives from their experience of dealing with data from the Indian sub-continent (Foster-Carter: 1978: 234-7). An analysis of the incorporation of that region into the world economy may help us to understand the parallel but different process of incorporation of the southern African region. Secondly, my data suggest that we should regard the peripheral areas of southern Africa and the regional capitalist economy as a part of one and the same CMP. This position does not, however, derive from a Banaji-type understanding of mode of production. My argument is that a dominated non- (or pre-) CMP ceases to exist (in articulation with a CMP) at such a stage as it (the non-CMP) can no longer be reproduced without substantial material inputs from the CMP.

This is the kind of position which both Kitchings (1977) and Roseberry (1978) have taken in their analyses of cash-crop production and differentiation in Kenya and Venezuela respectively. Roseberry (ibid) cites Banaji (1977) and would appear to be using his approach. But Kitchings (1977) seems to have come to this position by way of the articulation-of-modes route. He suggests, however, that "class divisions in Kenya are determined by the mode of appropriation of the surplus product" (ibid: 97; his emphasis) which takes his analysis back to the level of distribution rather than production.

Both Kitchings (1977) and Roseberry (1978) have stressed that there are inevitably technical inputs from 'outside' which support so-called 'pre-capitalist' relations in remnant 'traditional' societies. Thus, items like implements, seed and so forth are imported to allow for cash-crop production in many places where so-called

'peasant' producers work the land. Their argument is that one cannot talk of a persistence of a pre- or non-CMP (in articulation with the dominant CMP) if, at the level of factors of production, inputs from the CMP are required for the reproduction of the non-CMP sector. These factors are obtained by the exchange of produce, through intermediaries with whom the producers are in a non-capitalist relation and who appropriate some of the producers' surplus product in the exchange.

The argument becomes that much more forceful if the means of reproducing the apparently non-capitalist sector derive from the sale of wage-labour to capital. For here the relation is one of the sale of labour and not of product; and what is appropriated by capital is not surplus product but surplus labour.<sup>2</sup> This is the basic relation which determines the antagonism between capital and labour in the 'pure' CMP. It suggests that a 'one-mode' analysis is more useful than a 'two-in-articulation' concept.

This is much the same as the position reportedly adopted by Amselle (van Binsbergen and Meilink: 1978: 12). His argument hinges on the fact that the CMP has penetrated so extensively into contemporary rural Africa that "it is capitalism which, mainly through migrants' transfers in kind and remittances, has become a major factor in the reproduction of the peripheral village societies" (ibid: 9). Turning to southern Africa, Williams (1975: 31) has argued similarly that rural peripheral communities cannot be regarded as representing a distinct non-CMP if they lack the means of their own reproduction.<sup>3</sup>

A number of recent historical analyses have applied the concept of articulation of modes of production quite successfully to southern African material (e.g. see Palmer and Parsons: 1977; Beinart: 1978; Harries: 1979). Certain authors discussing

contemporary situations in the region have also utilized the concept. Despite his concern not "to perpetuate a dualist illusion" Webster (1978: 168: n.6) has applied the concept in his discussion of contemporary Mozambique. Yet he makes the point that that country is quite dependent on migratory wage-earnings: "In present day Mozambique the 'pre-capitalist' sector is unable to reproduce itself without the intervention of the capitalist mode (especially in the form of migrant labourers' wages)" (ibid: his parentheses). Webster justifies his use of the two-modes-in-articulation analysis by arguing that "it is in this (pre/non-capitalist) sector that the social security needs, and some of the subsistence costs, for the migrant and his family, are borne at little or no cost to the capitalist" (ibid: his emphasis). On the surface this appears to be self contradictory. The confusion stems, however, from the fact that in contemporary Mozambique, the means of reproduction (subsistence needs) are derived from a combination of local agricultural product (60%-70%) and migrant labour earnings (30%-40%) (David Webster: personal communication).

The relatively large portion of the means of reproduction which is obtained from local agriculture in Mozambique points to the differences which are no doubt to be found between the various peripheral areas in southern Africa (cf. Spiegel: 1977: 2; Ranger: 1978; Cliffe: 1977). These differences derive from a variety of factors, some social and others material: Examples are the degree of landlessness, the system of land tenure, the form of local administration, the types of crops etc. In southern Mozambique, for example, cassava (manioc) is the staple foodstuff, whereas in Lesotho maize is grown most widely as a staple crop. The quite different techniques of production these two crops require must have a bearing on their relative importance in providing the means

of subsistence. Much further research needs to be done, however, so that comparable data is available for comparative studies of this kind. One focus of that work will have to be to detail the socially and historically determined subsistence levels in each area researched.

In Lesotho it has been estimated that migrant labour earnings contributed 71% of domestic consumption needs while a further 12% came from non-agricultural activities in the country in 1976. Thus only 17% of the means of subsistence came from agriculture (van der Wiel: 1977: 87-8: Table 48). David Webster has recently worked in northern KwaZulu and he suggests that wage-dependence there may be greater even than in Lesotho (personal communication).

These differences in the degree of dependence on wage-earnings and on local agriculture again raise the problem of transition from a pre-CMP to a CMP. From the perspective of 'two-modes-in-articulation', the question which might be asked is: When does the pre-CMP cease to exist as a distinctive mode in articulation with the dominant CMP and become part and parcel of that CMP? An answer cannot, however, be found purely on the basis of material data, and at the level of factors of production. We need, instead, to examine the relations of production in the peripheral communities to discover whether these have been transformed into capitalist relations. In many cases these retain the appearance of pre-capitalist (or 'traditional') relations, thus giving rise to the persistence of dualist-type analyses.<sup>4</sup>

There seems to be only one justification for pursuing a 'two-modes-in-articulation' analysis: That is if, at the superstructural level, there is still a persistence of real (not illusory) non-capitalist relations in the periphery; in other words that 'traditional' political, religious and especially kinship relations

still function in the rural communities. But we must beware that this so-called persistence is not a disguise which covers a transformed relation. As Webster (1978: 168-9) has himself pointed out, these relations have, over time, been modified quite considerably in content, while in form - and thus in structure - they have appeared to remain unchanged (cf. Cliffe: 1977: 199; 1978: 333-5). The modification in the content of these relations suggests that the CMP has so encompassed them that, by now, they are fully part of that CMP. The data which I have presented on relations of production in Lesotho, such as those of the work-party - ostensibly reciprocal and 'traditional', in fact a disguised form of wage-labour - demonstrate that so-called pre-capitalist relations have been so modified that they are essentially of a capitalist nature.

There are, nonetheless, very clear differences between the periphery and the core in southern Africa, and I now attempt to understand the relationship between these two. Whereas a notion of articulation between two modes must necessarily be dualist, a notion of encompassment in a unitary mode overcomes this problem. Yet it permits the conceptualization of a hierarchy of groupings (classes, fractions, strata) within that mode.

## 2. Peripheral Communities as Part of the Proletariat

The fact that the reproduction of the peripheral communities in southern Africa depends on wage-earnings of labour migrants suggests more than that pre-capitalist relations have been transformed into those of a capitalist mode. It also tells us that the peripheral populations are of the regional proletariat. Yet their ideological commitment to the land, and a 'peasant-type' existence, and - in the Lesotho case - their commitment to a separate and independent political unit, suggest that they are

politically and ideologically separated from other strata in that class.

Poulantzas (1975: 35-6) has referred to the common necessity to distinguish strata in any one class - the example he uses is that of the labour aristocracy as a specific stratum of the working class. The criteria for such a distinction are not to be found at the economic level, but rather in differences at the political and ideological levels:

Differentiations within the working class do not purely and simply coincide with positions in the organisation of labour. They depend rather on political and ideological criteria, on forms of struggle and of combative organisation and on tradition; and these criteria have their own autonomy (ibid: 36: his emphasis).

Clearly we may apply this argument to a consideration of the working class in southern Africa. Frauenstein (1976) has argued that a distinction can be drawn between the White and Black strata of the working class.<sup>5</sup> This, she says, is based on differences in their political and ideological alignments vis a vis the White ruling bourgeoisie (ibid: 46). I am inclined to take her argument one step further and to suggest that the rural African population in southern Africa constitutes a distinct stratum of the working class, distinguished from both White and Black strata. What I am suggesting is that, objectively, the labour-exporting populations of the rural periphery in southern Africa are of the regional working class. Their class determination is proletarian although individuals may occupy different class positions during the various phases of their life-cycles. Structurally, however, they are all proletarianized. But the persistence, in the periphery, of social relations which are perceived as 'traditional' helps to separate these populations from the other strata of the working class.<sup>6</sup> The maintenance of so-called non-capitalist



institutions, moreover, helps to keep these populations apart so that further area- and 'ethnically'-based divisions may be apparent in this rural labour-exporting stratum.

The question which now emerges is: What is it that creates and maintains these political and ideological differences, and why? In other words, looking at the rural areas only, why and how do apparently non-capitalist superstructural relations persist in spite of large-scale involvement in wage-labour? (cf. van Binsbergen and Meilink: 1978: 12-13 who have asked these questions about Africa in general.) In the southern African context, it has been argued, segregationist strategies have attempted to reinforce these 'traditional' structures so that they may provide a subsidy to capital for the reproduction of labour power, especially in the period preceding World War II. In the subsequent period, of apartheid or separate development, modified so-called pre-capitalist forms are retained by and for "the political, social, economic and ideological enforcement of lower levels of subsistence" (Wolpe: 1973: 292) than obtain in the metropolitan areas.<sup>7</sup> Thus the Bantustan strategy has been to transform the peripheral political structures in order to continue domination by proxy (Molteno: 1979). A corollary is that an ideology of differentness is perpetuated by the ruling classes for themselves as well as for the dominated. This effectively justifies differential standards of living in the metropolitan and peripheral 'polities' (Molteno: 1979: 22; Burawoy: 1976: 1082).

### 3. Conclusion

This dissertation has attempted to show that although the population of a rural community in Lesotho is differentiated materially, this differentiation is frequently associated with

the domestic developmental cycle. The differentiation which obtains in such communities must not be seen as determined by exogenous demographic variables which are associated with the domestic cycle. To do this would be to ignore the forces for differentiation emanating from the wider system of which the rural community is but a small part. An analysis of local peripheral differentiation must thus always be encapsulated within a political-economic analysis of the relations between centre and periphery.

The ethnographic material which I have presented shows how migrant labour remittances are diffused through the community and thus how they provide the material means for the reproduction of that community. Such remittances are available to the community only through the sale of wage-labour.

The rural differentiation which I have discussed is largely cyclical and it is thus wrong to associate it only with what Raikes (1978: 286) calls the 'classic' process of rural class formation - i.e. internal differentiation with the emergence of kulaks and poor peasants. And precisely because of the intense dependence of rural communities on migratory wage-labour earnings, it is easy to fall into the trap of saying merely that such communities, as a whole, have become proletarianized. But this says nothing of their internal differentiation.

The beginnings of internal class formation are indeed to be found in such communities as is demonstrated by the existence of an incipient petty bourgeoisie which provides the roots from which more permanent class divisions may grow. Most internal differentiation must, however, be explained first by accepting the essentially proletarian nature of the whole of these communities and then by understanding its developmental cyclical nature.

More classical class formation is indeed taking place in the

southern African periphery examined as a whole and including especially the Bantustans ('Black States') and independent ex-protectorates. Within these peripheral 'units' we can see the reproduction of capitalist relations at all levels - and thus the formation of antagonistic classes. But in the rural communities differentiation is not necessarily an indication of class formation, primarily because of its cyclical nature.

Synchronically we can identify a series of apparent class determinations. But most households and individuals pass through these during their developmental and life cycles respectively. Thus they will occupy different class positions at different times. This has important political implications. If people expect, and go through, a number of class positions serially the likelihood of their allying themselves with those in the same class determination at any one time is minimized. Therein lies another 'benefit' to the apartheid strategists. Not only has it (i) reproduced the political relations of domination in the periphery so as to rule by proxy (Molteno: 1978), and (ii) effected an ideological justification for differential subsistence levels so that the cost of renewal of the labour force is kept down (Burawoy: 1976; cf. Wolpe: 1973: 292); it has also managed to undermine proletarian class consciousness through encouraging the persistence of apparent non-capitalist relations.

## NOTES TO CONCLUSION

### Chapter X

1. By 'non-capitalist' relations I mean those which, in another idiom, might have been called 'traditional'. These include relations such as those between chief and commoner, lineage elder and younger agnate, etc. I use the qualification 'so-called' because although 'non-capitalist' institutions like the chieftainship still exist today, these are in considerably modified forms. The elements in a 'pre-(non-)capitalist' structure such as the chieftainship system are called today by the same terms as were used in earlier times. But both those elements and the relations between them are today quite different from those from which they had evolved in the immediate 'pre-contact' period.
2. Berger (n.d.: 22-4) has argued that the appropriation of surplus labour may be seen as the appropriation of the surplus product of the reproducers of labour. This would suggest that the family-unit in a capitalist environment represents the persistence of a non-CMP in articulation with the dominant CMP. This leads into the debate over the concept of a domestic (housework) mode of production (see, inter alia Gardiner: 1976; Edholm et al: 1977). It also returns us to the problem of whether or not to conceptualize all social formations as comprising a series of modes of production in articulation, but with one dominating the others.
3. Berger's analysis (op. cit.) takes the argument one step further by raising the essentially epistemological problem of whether the rural reproducers of labour power (women, and old men) are in a direct or an indirect relationship of exploitation with capital.
4. Dualist analyses in one or another idiom have pervaded discussions of labour migration and rural development/underdevelopment in southern Africa since Houghton's (1960) essay or even earlier (Also cf. Sadie: 1960, and, more generally, Lewis: 1954, Berg: 1961, and Miracle and Berry: 1970). Studies in this tradition have attributed the lack of development in the rural areas to the 'backwardness of traditional society' and the stifling effects of 'superstition and custom' on industriousness and innovation. (See Sadie: 1960; and cf. Murray's (1976a: 10-12) critique of such an analysis; also see Parsons and Palmer: 1977). This backwardness, it was argued, necessitated labour migration to the progressive modern economy which alone is able to develop unencumbered by such hindrances. More recently, however, it has been pointed out that African cultivators did respond most positively to the opportunities of the produce market, until such time as their access to that market was closed by political means (Arrighi: 1970; Wilson: 1971; Bundy: 1972; 1979; Beinart: 1975; Murray: 1976a: 14-19; Parsons and Palmer: 1977: 20-6 and all the articles in Palmer and Parsons: 1977). Rural underdevelopment has come to be seen as a product of the development of capitalism in the core areas of South Africa. The unity of the regional economy has thus come to be accepted, but with two distinct poles (or modes in articulation). This is the tradition in which Webster (1978) would seem to fall. But, as Molteno (1978: 20) has pointed out, a "picture of the articulation of a capitalist mode of production

with a non-capitalist mode of production is a mere translation of the pluralist notion of a dual economy into the 'Marxist' code of language". (Molteno's emphasis; cf. Parsons and Palmer: 1977: 4).

5. Frauenstein uses the term 'fractions' instead of strata. This seems to be an incorrect usage at least if we are to follow Poulantzas (1973). He distinguishes fractions of a class by differences at the economic level despite convergence at the political and ideological levels (ibid: 37-9).
6. My argument is essentially a structural one, and 'instances' used as examples beg the sorts of questions raised by situational analyses. Nonetheless, one seemingly stark reminder of the ideological, and often also political, antagonisms between migrants and 'urban insiders' (Wilson: 1975) was the violence which erupted between 'hostel' dwellers and other Soweto residents during August 1976, despite the alleged police orchestration (Sunday Tribune: 29.08.76; cf. Peskin and Spiegel: 1976: 33 and P. Mayer's preface).  
It seems that the growing 'concern' of the White establishment over the plight of urban Africans is playing on these structural differences and potential antagonisms. This is exemplified by the activities and statements of the Urban Foundation (see 'Urban Foundation': 1977. Debate around the findings of the Wiehahn commission and the subsequent proposed legislation suggest that these differences will be legally entrenched and thus reinforced (de Villiers: 1979; Financial Mail: 4.5.79; NUSAS: n.d.) Most Black nationalist groups are attempting to underplay these differences as is Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkatha movement and the related Black Alliance. The co-operation of 'Coloured' and migrant African workers in the Fattis and Monis strike action during 1979 indicates that these differences are not so deep-seated as to prevent concerted worker action. (Work in Progress 9).
7. For the development of these ideas in the southern African context see Wolpe (1972; 1973), Morris (1977) among others; and Berger (n.d.) for a critical review of the thesis. The continuing underdevelopment of the rural labour exporting areas of southern Africa, as a consequence of the development of capitalism in the region, has been ignored by Gerold-Scheepers and van Binsbergen (1978). They have used Meillassoux (1975) to derive a model which they superimpose onto contemporary southern Africa to suggest an image of a situation in which peripheral labour supplying communities continue to subsidize the capitalist sector from non-capitalist production (ibid: 26). They do this despite (a) their own comment that "Meillassoux' theory of migration seems to apply better to colonial, than to post-colonial Africa" (ibid: 27); (b) their paraphrase of Amselle (1976: 30-4) that "capitalism will sustain these contacts (between migrants and their home areas) because they produce (sic; I assume this is a typographical error which should read 'reduce') the cost of living of the migrants" (ibid). (cf. Burawoy: 1976) (If there is no typo my criticism still stands). Seidman (1977: 414) makes a similar error when she describes apartheid as the institutionalization of a system whereby wages are insufficient to maintain and replace (reproduce) the labour force.

# A P P E N D I C E S

## APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL TABLES

Table A.1    Proportions of cash values of Lesotho's imports  
by commodity group 1973-5

	1973 %	1974 %	1975 %
Foodstuffs	25,6	19,9	18,7
Livestock	0,9	0,9	
Animal & vegetable oils/fats	0,8	1,0	0,9
Beverages & tobacco	3,6	4,1	4,4
Fuels & lubricants	4,7	6,6	6,1
Crude (raw) materials	0,7	0,6	0,7
Chemicals	4,6	5,1	5,4
Machinery & vehicles	11,4	10,3	10,9
Other manufactured goods	47,8	51,5	52,9
Totals	100,1	100,0	100,0

Total cash values in  
thousands of rand                      60 479              81 722              117 273

Sources: These proportions were taken from tables of cash values of imports; viz. Lesotho (1974: 26-30: Table 39); Lesotho (1975: 25-32: Table 16); Lesotho (1976b: 11: Table 10 - preliminary figures).

Table A.2    See next page.

Table A.3    Proportional absentee component of Lesotho's de jure  
population in census years

Year	%
1911	5,8
1921	8,7
1936	15,3
1946	18,6
1956	19,5
1966	12,0
1976	12,5

Sources: 1911-1966: van der Wiel (1977: 14: Table 1); 1976 derived from SAIRR (1977: 210) and Lesotho (1976c: 2: Table 2)

Table A.2 African population of Lesotho by census year 1891-1976

Year of census	<u>M a l e s</u>			<u>F e m a l e s</u>			<u>T o t a l</u>		
	Present ( <u>de facto</u> )	Absent	Total ( <u>de jure</u> )	Present ( <u>de facto</u> )	Absent	Total ( <u>de jure</u> )	Present ( <u>de facto</u> )	Absent	Total ( <u>de jure</u> )
1891	105 308	-	-	113 190	-	-	218 504	-	-
1904	163 353	-	-	184 600	-	-	347 953	-	-
1911	183 139	21 658	204 797	219 790	2 972	222 752	402 919	24 630	427 549
1921	222 848	37 827	260 675	274 158	9 314	283 472	497 006	47 141	544 147
1936	239 313	78 604	317 918	321 223	22 669	343 892	560 536	101 273	661 809
1946	246 643	95 697	342 340	315 248	32 331	347 579	561 891	128 128	689 919
1956	270 756	112 790	383 546	368 745	41 992	410 737	639 501	154 782	794 253
1966	367 087	96 350	463 437	482 926	19 550	502 476	850 013	115 900	965 913
1976	preliminary figures <sup>a</sup>		586 870			627 090	1 061 772	152 188 <sup>b</sup>	1 213 960

- Notes: a. The 1976 total (de jure) population figures are preliminary data published in Lesotho (1976c: 2: Table 2).
- b. The 1976 absentee figure is from SAIRR (1977: 210) and the present (de facto) population for that year is the difference between the Lesotho (1976c) de jure figure and the SAIRR (1977) absentee figure.
- c. Sources: As cited in Notes a and b and Murray (1976a: 28: Table 1.5); van der Wiel (1977: 14: Table 1).

Table A.4      Proportional female component of Lesotho's absentee population in census years

Year	%	
1911	12,1	
1921	19,8	
1936	22,4	Sources: Derived from Murray (1976a: 28: Table 1.5) and van der Wiel (1977: 14: Table 1); 1976 figure from Judy Gay (personal communication 1979).
1946	25,2	
1956	27,1	
1966	16,8	
1976	14,3	

Table A.5      Distribution of foreign African labour in South Africa, by sector 1974-6 (showing Lesotho contingent in mining and quarrying sector)

<u>Sector</u>	<u>Number of foreign workers</u>		
	1974	1975	1976
Agriculture	24 500	15 230	16 648
Mining & Quarrying	416 745 (104 096) <sup>a</sup>	348 066 (121 988)	317 208 (129 533)
Manufacturing industry	11 923	12 409	12 575
Construction	19 150	8 727	8 878
Wholesale & Retail trade	3 385	3 668	4 241
Government service	10 358	10 220	11 265
Domestic service	9 208	10 417	13 130
Other	5 526	5 829	6 069
Totals	500 795	414 586	390 010

Notes: a. Figures in brackets denote the Lesotho contingent of workers in the mining and quarrying sector.

b. Sources: RP 114-1975: p. 26; RP 28-1976: pp. 92-3; RP 28-1977: pp. 104-5.

1976-1977



Table A.6    Numbers and proportions of village adult men and women, by age categories

Ages (years)	Males		Females		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
16-25	53	38,7	44	27,5	97	32,7
26-35	26	19,0	33	20,6	59	19,9
36-45	23	16,8	23	14,4	46	15,5
46-55	14	10,2	21	13,3	35	11,8
56-65	15	10,9	26	16,3	41	13,8
66-75	6	4,4	7	4,4	13	4,4
76+	-	-	6	3,8	6	2,0
Totals	137	100,0	160	100,0	297	100,1

Table A.7    Educational levels of post-school adult male village population, by age categories

Years of schooling	16-25 yrs		26-35 yrs		36-45 yrs		46-55 yrs		56-65 yrs		66-75 yrs		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nil	4	9,8	2	7,7	4	17,4	1	7,1	8	53,3	4	66,7	23	18,4
1-4	9	22,0	3	11,5	7	30,4	6	42,9	4	26,7	1	16,7	30	24,0
5-7	16	39,0	8	30,8	8	34,8	4	28,6	2	13,3	1	16,7	39	31,2
8-10	8	19,5	11	42,5	3	13,0	1	7,1	1	6,7	-	-	24	19,2
11+	4	9,8	2	7,7	1	4,3	2	14,3	-	-	-	-	9	7,2
Totals	41	100,1	26	100,2	23	99,9	14	100,0	15	100,0	6	100,1	125	100,0

Table A.8 Educational levels of post-school adult female village population, by age categories

Years of schooling	16-25 yrs		26-35 yrs		36-45 yrs		46-55 yrs		56-65 yrs		66-75 yrs		76+ yrs		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nil	1	2,9	2	6,7	1	5,0	4	20,0	10	38,5	3	42,9	4	80,0	25	17,5
1-4	1	2,9	-	-	4	20,0	3	15,0	8	30,8	1	14,3	1	20,0	18	12,6
5-7	15	42,9	19	63,3	10	50,0	9	45,0	8	30,8	3	42,9	-	-	64	44,8
8-10	12	34,3	8	26,7	5	25,0	3	15,0	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	19,6
11+	6	17,1	1	3,3	-	-	1	5,0	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	5,6
Totals	35	100,1	30	100,0	20	100,0	20	100,0	26	100,1	7	100,1	5	100,0	143	100,1
No data	-	-	3	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	8	-
Totals	35	-	33	-	23	-	21	-	26	-	7	-	6	-	151	-

Table A.9 Ages and degree of education of village household heads, by sex

Ages (years)	M a l e s				F e m a l e s			
	No.	%	Years of schooling mean	range	No	%	Years of schooling mean	range
26-35	10	18,2	6,4	0-13	2	7,1	7,0	5-9
36-45	15	27,3	4,8	0-13	1	3,6	6,0	-
46-55	12	21,8	4,8	0-12	9	32,1	6,1	2-10
56-65	12	21,8	2,1	0-6	13	46,4	2,5	0-7
66-76	6	10,9	1,2	0-4	3	10,7	4,7	4-5
Totals/ aggregates	55	100,0	4,1	0-13	28	99,9	4,4	0-10

Table A.10 Average reported agricultural yields for village households with 5, 3, 2 and 1 fields respectively: 1975/6-1977/8

Season	Maize yields (tins <sup>1</sup> )			Sorghum yields (tins)			Bean yields (tins)			Other crops details	number reporting	Number reporting no yields	Number supplying no data
	mean	range	number reporting	mean	range	number reporting	mean	range	number reporting				
<u>Households with 5 fields:</u> (1 household: household size <sup>2</sup> = 3 persons)													
1977/8	12			24			-			-		-	-
1976/7	12			2			-			-		-	-
1975/6	6			12			5			-		-	-
<u>Households with 3 fields:</u> (14 households: household size: mean = 8,2; range = 4-20)													
1977/8	13,3	1-37	12	14,3	2-30	8	4,4	1-9	8	8 Bags potatoes	1	2	-
1976/7	13,8	2-33	8	8,4	1-18	8	7,0	2-15	5	R150 worth of potatoes & cabbages	1	1	1
1975/6	20,0	3-72	12	6,1	1-12	8	6,5	1-12	13			-	1
<u>Households with 2 fields:</u> (25 households: household size: mean = 6,3; range = 2-14)													
1977/8	7,1	1-18	19	8,8	1-18	15	2,6	1-5	11	1 Bag potatoes; barley 2 tins peas	1 1	2	2
1976/7	5,5	1-15	14	6,7	1-18	12	2,8	1-6	4	Barley	1	4	-
1975/6	11,4	3-30	16	5,8	1-15	10	4,7	1-12	19	-		3	1
<u>Households with 1 field:</u> (27 households: household size: mean = 5,7; range = 1-12)													
1977/8	3,5	1-12	13	7,4	1-16	12	1,5	1-3	4	-		9	2
1976/7	4,6	1-24	10	2,3	1-6	4	6,0	6	2	-		13	-
1975/6	6,5	1-18	17	5,6	1-18	7	4,1	1-18	17	-		6	1

Notes: 1. 6 tins are approximately equivalent to 1 bag which (for grain) weighs in the region of 200 lbs. (90-90 kg.) when filled. A tin, which consists of an empty 20 litre oil or paraffin tin, thus contains about 14 kg. of grain. Beans and other legumes are rather heavier.

2. Household size here refers to the de jure sizes of households.

Table A.11    Marital status of de jure household heads, by sex

	Men	Women
Married	50	-
Widowed	1	16
Divorced/separated	4	2
Deserted (H absconded)	-	6
Never married	-	4
<u>Totals</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>28</u>

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APPENDIX B: FIELD SIZE, HOUSEHOLD SIZE  
AND NUMBERS OF FIELDS HELD BY HOUSEHOLDS

Hamnett (1973: 42), who had based his discussion on the aggregate country-wide statistics of the 1960 Agricultural Census, has shown that field size increases with an increase in the number of fields held by a household; i.e. the more fields a household holds the larger the mean area of those fields is likely to be. This finding is borne out in the 1970 Census of Agriculture from which Table B.1 derives. Unfortunately these data are available only as aggregates for the whole country.<sup>1</sup>

Table B.1    Numbers of fields and mean areas of fields by total area of households' landholdings (N = 185 076 households)

Area of household's total landholding (acres)	Percentage of landholding households	Number of fields held per household	Mean area per field (acres)
Less than 2,00	19,9	1,39	0,87
2,00 - 3,99	30,1	1,92	1,53
4,00 - 5,99	22,0	2,39	2,04
6,00 - 7,99	12,1	2,41	2,82
8,00 - 9,99	7,2	2,80	3,17
10,00 - 14,99	6,1	3,22	3,82
15,00 and over	2,6	3,94	4,90
Totals/Mean	100,0	2,17	2,26

Source: Lesotho (1972: 45: Table 1.0431)

Hamnett (1973: 43) has referred also to the strong positive correspondence which exists between the 1960 figures for size of household and size of landholding - in numbers of fields held (see his Table IV). This factor, he points out, "lends support to the view that the large holdings do not represent an inequitable distribution of land resources" (ibid.) on a per capita basis. Furthermore, he says, the average area of land per head held by smaller households is significantly greater than that held by larger households. Once again these findings are borne out by the 1970 Census of Agriculture, as Table B.2 shows.

Data I have on the sizes of fields in Ha Makhaola and Li-thabeng are limited to what I could glean from the land register

1. The problems of using these sources are discussed above (Chapter II, note 5) and the limitations of these data should be recognized.

kept by the chieftainess and her development committee. Since the (L.S.) Land (Advisory Boards Procedure) Regulations (No. 15 of 1965) were promulgated each of these committees must keep a register of fields allocated in their respective areas of jurisdiction. These Regulations were superseded by the Land (Procedure) Act (No. 24 of 1967) which was in turn superseded by the Land Act (No. 20 of 1973) which is applied in conjunction with the Land Regulations 1974 (Notice No. 9 of 1974). Section 15 (3) of the Land Act 1973 states: "Every Chief shall keep or cause to be kept a register of all allocations of land or grants of any right or interest in or over land made by him." Furthermore, regulation 10 of the Land Regulations 1974 states: "In addition to the register required to be kept in accordance with section 15 (3) of the Act every Chief shall maintain a complete record of lands allocated to persons or families under his jurisdiction."

A comparison of the register's record with my census and other data on landholding suggests that the Ha Makhaola register is quite incomplete, but I shall use figures from it to demonstrate the order of field size being allocated in the whole area of the development committee's jurisdiction during the period 1966-76. The register contains a record of (all?) allocations of land since 1966 including both arable and residential allocations. Each entry includes only two figures, ostensibly the paced measure (i.e. approximately yards or metres) of two sides of a theoretically rectangular piece of land. We may make an assumption that these figures are sufficient to calculate approximate areas, although it must be noted that the areas given can be nothing more precise than approximations. Wallman (1965; 1969: 136) has discussed some of the difficulties encountered in translating Sesotho measures of area into western measures, while the problems of field area measurement are sufficiently complex to have provided a need for special instructions to enumerators on the 1970 Census of Agriculture (see Lesotho: 1972: 22 and pp. 239-40).

The Ha Makhaola land register records 143 fields having been allocated in the period 1966-76. The mean (approximate) area of these 143 fields is 1.1 acres; the mode and the median are both at 1.0 acres. With the exception of one allocation recorded as 130 x 505 (i.e.  $\pm 13.6$  acres; the unit of measure is paces, i.e. approx. yards) the other allocations all ranged between 0.1 and 4.1 acres; all but five allocations were recorded as having had an area of 2.6 acres or less. I am unable to attempt to test whether, synchronically and at the level of the village, size of landholding increases with size of household as has been demonstrated for the whole country. This is because I do not have areas of landholdings for all households, although I do have numbers of fields held. A comparison of numbers of fields held with de jure size of household may be made by examining Table B.3.

Table B.2 Proportions and sizes of landholding households by total area of households' landholdings  
(N = 187 421 households) (Percentages)

Holding size (acres)	Farm Households with										
	Total	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons	6 Persons	7 Persons	8 Persons	9 Persons	10 Persons & over
Without land	99.99	-	4.39	3.03	10.92	7.80	16.63	24.90	8.74	5.07	18.51
Under- 2.00	100.00	8.61	10.26	12.80	20.52	18.28	10.46	3.28	5.76	1.69	3.34
2.00- 3.99	100.00	6.23	12.23	14.31	16.04	16.90	9.50	9.73	6.70	3.75	4.61
4.00- 5.99	100.00	4.46	7.11	10.80	16.20	16.69	11.50	12.17	8.93	5.52	6.62
6.00- 7.99	100.00	4.89	3.02	12.86	15.16	17.86	12.03	8.43	6.77	4.61	9.37
8.00- 9.99	100.00	5.03	8.81	8.69	12.50	13.01	17.62	10.94	8.17	6.12	9.11
10.00-14.99	99.99	7.61	2.57	9.13	9.21	16.55	10.98	11.93	13.18	3.18	15.65
15.00 & over	99.99	-	5.04	8.91	4.82	4.21	10.21	13.25	15.99	12.14	25.42
Total	100.00	5.92	9.11	12.09	15.84	16.52	11.20	10.32	7.77	4.19	7.05

Source: Lesotho (1972: 49: Table 1.0532; Also see p. 51: Table 1.0632)

Table B.3    Households with 1, 2, 3 and 5 fields respectively  
showing numbers of households of differing household  
sizes

<u>Household size</u> (persons)	<u>No. of households with:</u>			
	<u>1 field</u>	<u>2 fields</u>	<u>3 fields</u>	<u>5 fields</u>
1	5	-	-	-
2	1	4	-	-
3	2	2	-	1
4	2	1	1	-
5	4	2	4	-
6	2	3	-	-
7	2	7	1	-
8	2	1	2	-
9	4	1	2	-
10	-	2	3	-
11	1	1	-	-
12	2	-	-	-
14	-	1	-	-
20	-	-	1	-



### APPENDIX C: FIELDWORK METHOD

The major part of the fieldwork for this study was conducted between September 1976 and April 1977. From the beginning of October 1976 until the middle of April 1977 I resided, with my wife, in a rondavel on the Local Court reserve alongside the village which I have called Ha Makhaola. Our stay was interrupted by a four week break, from mid-November to mid-December 1976, when we returned to Rhodes University, Grahamstown where I was based at the time. I re-visited the field for a short period over Christmas and New Year 1978/9.

In the village I was accompanied by a local man from a nearby village who acted as my interpreter/assistant. I am able to speak some Sesotho but, in situations in which a number of Basotho are involved in deep discussion with one another, my command of the language is not adequate for me to understand fully, although I do follow the drift. It was then that I had to rely on my assistant's help in translating and reporting the details discussed. My assistant also did a small amount of independent interviewing for which he used an interview schedule. A few more schedules were completed by one of the women of the community.

My data were collected both through conducting formal interviews and through the anthropological method of participant observation. I conducted a short census-type series of interviews in both Ha Makhaola and Lithabeng during my first few weeks in the village. This followed my appearance at a general meeting of the village (pitso) where I explained the purpose of my visit. I also conducted a number of interviews using one of a series of four interview schedules (see below). These were directed both at labour migrants - of whom a number were at home over the Christmas and New Year holidays - and at their wives and others who remain in the village. Despite my use of interview schedules, many of these interviews became quite open-ended, some of the questions being designed to elicit discussion rather than direct answers. In addition, I tape-recorded a number of open-ended interviews and discussions. These were then transcribed by my assistant and I was able to employ a recent matriculant to translate them for me. Where I have used quotes from these and other interviews, in the text of this dissertation, I have attempted to double check the translations. The transcripts and translations are still in my possession. Most of the tapes were re-recorded and only a few recordings still exist.

In addition to interviewing I also attended work-parties, litokofele, feasts and similar gatherings where I collected a certain amount of data. Quite frequently I stopped in at one or other of the local roadside beerhouses where the open-endedness of the community is felt most clearly because of the number of outsiders and passers-by one meets there.

After my return from the field, and until the end of 1977, I was fortunate to receive a monthly chronicle of events in the community from one of the women living there. She also sent me

details of the various arrangements made for working the fields, and yields obtained by the various households of the community for the 1976/7 and 1977/8 seasons.

While I was in the field I was able to obtain a certain amount of data about individual miners from the community by perusing the records of the TEBA recruiting agency's Qacha's Nek office. I must record my thanks here to the then manager of the office, Alex Wainwright, for allowing me access to these records. I was also given access to the purchase records of a local store, and one cafe owner kept a daily record of sales for me. I also had a number of women keep daily records of all the purchases members of their respective households made over a period of some months. I suspect, however, that these are incomplete: the lack of entries recording the purchase of beer are one indication of their inaccuracy.

The project of which this study was originally a part was funded by the Chamber of Mines through their Human Resources Laboratory (H.R.L.). This had both advantages and disadvantages. Through the office of the Director of the H.R.L. I was able to obtain copies of mine wage- and record-sheets for a number of miners from the community. These allowed me to build up an idea of some of these men's work histories. They also provided me with examples of the wage-receipt patterns of a few miners whom I had already interviewed. The H.R.L. also provided me with some recent recruiting and labour strength statistics for the gold mines.

My link with the Chamber of Mines also gave me access - unfortunately for a day and a half only - to a collection of invaluable records housed in the basement of the head-office of the Chamber. These included monthly reports to the TEBA (previously M.L.O., N.R.C.) head-office from each of their recruiting district superintendents around the sub-continent. I was unable to utilize these - and other archival material in Lesotho - as I might have, had I had the time. I was shocked to discover, however, that some of the earlier reports had already been destroyed by TEBA instead of having been placed in the Chamber's archives. I had hoped that the H.R.L. would be able to prevent any further destruction but I believe nothing has been done in this regard.

The disadvantage of the link with the H.R.L. was that, at one stage, there was an attempt to draw our project team into a combined survey to ascertain the reasons for the range in the periods of time labourers remain on a mine before requesting a discharge and returning home. Ostensibly the results would have suggested ways conditions in the hostels might be improved.

It was suggested that each fieldworker select some of his mine-labouring informants, interview them specially, and submit a completed schedule to the H.R.L. so that these men could then be interviewed again on the mines, at various stages in their contracts. I objected to this arguing that it is unethical to break one's informant's anonymity. For a time pressure was put on me, but I refused to divulge names. I did, however, submit a series of completed interviews, but without identifying data.

After my return to Grahamstown a further compromise was worked out: I arranged with my ex-assistant that he would do a

set of similar interviews, with men from any part of the district but excluding persons from Ha Makhaola, Lithabeng and any of the nearby villages which I had occasionally visited during my research. Respondants were to be warned explicitly that they could expect to be interviewed again on the mines. They were also to be given the opportunity to refuse to be interviewed once the aim of the exercise had been explained to them. The completed schedules which resulted were extremely thin, however, and I was later informed that the whole survey was shelved by the H.R.L.

### Interview Schedules

In all I used six interview schedules, one of which was for the H.R.L. survey. The types of questions asked by each of these, and the numbers of responses obtained are listed below. I have used these schedules along with open-ended interviews for the case studies in the text. The aggregate data which I present is in Part A of the dissertation.

1. Census schedule - responses from representatives of all 83 households in the community.
  - a) Demographic data, including places of employment.
  - b) Stock- and landholdings.
  - c) Partners in agricultural co-operation (including mafisa).
  - d) Sources of income.
2. Migrants' schedule - 14 responses from migrants of various ages and in various types of employment in South Africa.
  - a) Work histories.
  - b) Earnings and amounts repatriated - in cash and kind.
  - c) Local dependants and recipients of remittances and gifts.
  - d) The work situation: 'homeboys' at work; compulsory deferred pay system; wages; factors for selecting types of employment; desirability of being nearer home; education and types of employment.
  - e) The land - its perceived importance.
3. Resident housekeepers' schedule I - 13 responses from women of various ages some with remitting husbands, others without.
  - a) Receipts in cash: remittances (amounts and frequency); local employment; other local cash income (excluding agriculture).
  - b) Receipts in kind: from absent labourers; food-aid payments.
  - c) Expenditure of money received: large items (cattle, house-building etc.).
  - d) Setokofele/savings-club participation.
  - e) Education and types of employment.
4. Resident housekeepers' schedule II - 22 responses from wives of absentees, women who head households and men who are local cultivators/contractors; of various ages.
  - a) Landholdings: number of fields; soil type; estimated field size (not sufficiently accurate to be useful); vegetable gardens.

- b) Types of co-operation for working each field - 1976/7 season.
- c) Crops and yields: three seasons - 1974/5, 1975/6, 1976/7 (no yields); crop sales (if any).
- d) Yields from vegetable garden; sales (if any).
- e) Contracting to work others' fields: types of arrangements; incomes in cash and kind.
- f) Other local employment and income.
- g) Livestock: numbers held; numbers put out (mafisa); numbers cared for (others' mafisa); sales (1975, 1976); sales of animal products (1976); animals slaughtered or died and eaten (1975; 1976); animal products consumed (1976 - three selected months, i.e. April, July, December).
- h) Brewing beer: amounts brewed, sales, costs and income in each of April, July and December 1976 (estimates).
- i) Estimates of daily consumption needs in each month of the year (poor responses).

5. Cash Expenditure Schedule - 11 poor responses from male and female resident housekeepers of various ages. Schedule subsequently suspended.

This schedule hoped to gain estimates of households' expenditure during the course of a year. Responses were unreliable because of the need for respondents to estimate their expenses, and because most found the interview tedious and boring. Items were listed under the following headings:

- a) Food products.
- b) Fuels.
- c) Livestock..
- d) Clothing.
- e) Building materials.
- f) Furniture.
- g) Household appliances.
- h) Farm implements.
- i) Craft tools.
- j) Farm inputs (seeds etc.).
- k) Taxes.
- l) Bridewealth..
- m) School fees.
- n) Payments for labour.
- o) Savings-deposits.
- p) Transport.
- q) Medical Expenses.
- r) Gifts to others.
- s) Cosmetics and cleaning materials.
- t) Miscellaneous.

6. H.R.L. Schedule - 7 responses returned without identifying data; a further 9 responses from men not known to me and of no use to my own study. Many of the questions posed are similar to those of the census and migrants' schedules.

- a) Personal and household demographic data.
- b) Sources of cash income: wage-earners.
- c) Material possessions: homestead size; furniture; implements etc.
- d) Stockholdings: changes in herd size over previous ten years (impossible).

- e) Landholdings: fields and vegetable gardens.
- f) Crop yields over previous three years; reasons for fluctuations.
- g) Work history.
- h) Remittances and purposes for which remitted; amounts repatriated.
- i) Expected frequency of home visit: reasons.
- j) Good and bad points about work on the gold mines - list and rank.
- k) Comparison with work 'in town'; or 'other' mines.
- l) Reasons for joining gold mines.
- m) "How do your parents, wife, kinsmen, feel about the fact that you work on the mines?"
- n) Likely date of return to the mines; reasons.
- o) Expected length of time to be served during next contract; reasons.

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